



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
17th Sunday after Pentecost
September 20, 2026 ~ Hybrid Workshop

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Njalo

South African

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in your presence, Holy One.

We bring our worries and our wonderings.

We feel like we don't do nearly enough to ease the suffering of our world.

We feel like we don't pray nearly enough to stay centered on you.

Help us to remember we are already enough.

You love us through and through.

You have formed us as your people.

Your grace goes with us on our journey.

Help us to be still enough to know

and bold enough to go where you are calling us.

Sharon Seyfarth Garner, adapted

*HYMN

God of Grace and God of Glory

Chalice Hymnal No. 464

God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us scorn thy Christ, assail thy ways!
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to faith and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's warring madness; bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy righteous goal,
lest we miss thy righteous goal.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Holy God, in your gracious presence we confess our reluctance to accept your grace for our selves and especially for others. Although Christ is among us as liberator we live as peoples divided against ourselves, as we cling to the values of a broken world. The profit and pleasure we pursue lay waste the land and pollute the seas. The fears and jealousies that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor, and nation against nation. We abuse your gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect and reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression. Heal and forgive us. Set us free to receive your extravagant grace and offer the same to our neighbors as bearers of your reconciling love. Amen

(Presbyterian Church in Canada, adapted)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen for Choir

Abrahams

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 3:10-4:11

NRSVUE

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed God's mind about the calamity that God had said God would bring upon them, and God did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Holy One and said, "O God! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. And now, O God, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And God said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." Then God said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night.

And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: Thanks be to God.

WORD FOR CHILDREN

My New Friend Is So Fun!

Pastors Jennifer and Guy

By: Mo Willems

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 helper is Cindy Livingston.

ANTHEM

The Goodness of God

Johnson, Fielding...

SCRIPTURE

Mathew 20:1-16

NRSVUE

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'

When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

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

SERMON

Grace Beyond Grudges

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

***HYMN**

We Are Not Our Own

Sing of the World Made New No. 108

We are not our own. Earth forms us,
human leaves on nature's growing vine,
fruit of many generations, seeds of life divine.

We are not alone. Earth names us:
past and present, peoples near and far,
family and friends and strangers show us who we are.

Therefore let us make thanksgiving,
and with justice, willing and aware,
give to earth, and all things living, liturgies of care.

And if love's encounters lead us
on a way uncertain and unknown,
all the saints with prayer surround us: we are not alone.

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

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

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TEACHES

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

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)

Liberating God, you have blessed us so that we might be a blessing. Receive these gifts and use them to feed the hungry, lift the oppressed, welcome the stranger, and make pathways toward freedom and justice May what we give today become part of your work of liberation, healing, and hope in the world. Amen.

Guy Johnson

*HYMN

Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven

Chalice Hymnal No. 23

Praise, my soul, the God of heaven, glad of heart your carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God's praise?
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all our days.

Praise to God for grace and favor shown to all who are oppressed.
God shows steadfast love forever, slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Glorious is God's faithfulness!

Mother-like, God tends and spares us, knowing well our fragile frame.
Father-like, God gently bears us, tender-hearted, slow to blame.
Alleluia! Alleluia! All within me praise God's name!

*BENEDICTION

When we are angry,
help us be well.
When we are certain,
help us be curious.
When we lose our way,
keep us still enough to know.
When you lead us forth,
make us bold enough to go. Amen.

Sharon Seyfarth Garner, adapted

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Dan Hockensmith

Welcome Table: Elizabeth Cooper-Martin

Cover Image: Unsplash: by Martin Katler

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

Cha'Mia Holloman, 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