



Rockville United Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)/United Church of Christ
15th Sunday after Pentecost
Feast of Creation
September 6, 2026 ~ Hybrid Workshop

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

CELEBRATING OUR LIFE TOGETHER

GATHERING MUSIC

Nijalo

South African

*CALL TO WORSHIP

In the beginning God created heaven and earth;

and saw that they were good.

Wisdom was firmly set from everlasting,

delighting the Most High day by day, ever at play in God's presence;

and God saw that she was good.

In the beginning was the Word who was with God, and who was God;

and God saw that he was good.

God is not far from any of us;

and sees that we are good.

So come and worship the God in whom we live, move, and have our being,

because God is good!

*HYMN

I Sing the Mighty Power of God Presbyterian Hymnal No. 288

I sing the mighty power of God

That made the mountains rise;

That spread the flowing seas abroad

And built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained

The sun to rule the day;

The moon shines full at God's command,

And all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord

That filled the earth with food;

God formed the creatures with a word

And then pronounced them good.

Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,

Where'er I turn my eyes;

If I survey the ground I tread,

Or gaze upon the skies!

There's not a plant or flower below
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee
Is ever in Thy care,
And every where that we can be,
Thou, God, art present there.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Sustaining God, inform us and teach us to read the signs of sky and soil, that we may rise to be friends of Christ, the Word become flesh. May we listen to and protect our teachers— our fellow creatures and stakeholders in your enduring rainbow covenant. Though we see the signs you send, we deny and decry these prophetic voices of creation even as the very foundations of the earth. Hold us to account for ways which kill what you sustain, for justice shirked and mercy despised. Hold us to account for our entitled preference for everything that keeps our feet from humbly walking, touching the earth, your living holy ground, our common home. Dear Christ by your grace, may we be forgiven and repurposed. Realign us with your wisdom which cares and shares, your compassion which perseveres and completes, and your friendship which promises abundant joy. Amen.

adapted, Rev David Coleman, EcoCongregation Scotland

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen for Choir

Abrahams

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1-10; 26-27; 31a

The Inclusive Bible

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But the earth became chaos and emptiness, and darkness came over the face of the Deep— yet the Spirit of God was brooding over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Light: Be!” and light was. God saw that light was good, and God separated light from darkness. God called the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

Then God said, “Now, make an expanse between the water! Separate water from water!” So it was: God made the expanse and separated the water above the expanse from the water below it. God called the expanse “Sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

Then God said, “Waters under the sky: be gathered into one place! Dry ground: appear!” So it was. God called the dry ground “Earth” and the gathering of the waters “Sea.” And God saw that this was good. ...

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground.” Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image

God created them; female and male, God made them. ...

God looked on all of this creation, and proclaimed that this was good—very good.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

All: Thanks be to God.

WORD FOR CHILDREN

“The Blessings of Backpacks”

Pastor Jennifer

Nursery care for infants through age 3 is available in the nursery on the lower level.

Our nursery caregiver is Caitlin Vrendenburg. Our nursery helper is Donna Lalley.

Older children are encouraged to remain in worship. The rug space in the sanctuary is available for quiet play, coloring and reading.

ANTHEM

You Can’t Beat God’s Giving

Akers

Soloist: Laurie Kawa

SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-5

The Inclusive Bible

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through the Word, and without the Word not one thing came into being. What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Sending You Light

Demore

SERMON

In the Beginning

Rev. Jennifer Knutsen

***HYMN**

Touch the Earth Lightly

Chalice Hymnal No. 693

Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger, who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster clouds of disaster—
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

With gratitude and generosity, we are invited pass on what has come into our hands, offering our gifts and ourselves to be transformed by the love and grace God.

*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.

***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)

Give us joy in our giving, wisdom in our spending, and peace in our hearts to share in God's ongoing work of creation. For the good of this earth of whom we're made, and in whom Christ shares, blessed be God forever. Amen.

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Love Divine, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
hill and vail, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
Love Divine, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thought and mild,
Love Divine, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

One: We gather round this table now as fellow creatures, at God's calling—
flock, huddle, shoal, swarm or family.
Drawn together to be more than our communities,
or even our congregation can be alone.

**All: Here and now, we're welcome—
like those friends Christ first gathered—
welcome for justice, fulfillment, and love.**

One: 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.

**All: 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.**

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

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God most high.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

One: Let us continue in prayer:
Creator God, throughout all ages, ...
... Christ calls us afresh
to care for a damaged world.

**All: Holy holy holy
God of power shared,
Sky and soil's abundant glory:
Hosanna: help us God!
Hosanna: heal Creation!**

One: Holy God, Sustainer, wild wind of change,
gusting and fluttering life, bless these good things of your earth
as we gather to share in the feast of your creation. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF BLESSING

One: Let us pray.

**All: Merciful Christ, Lamb of God,
you take away what truly harms the earth;
show your compassion; send your peace.
Creator 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: Jed Johnson and Jim Skinner

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT (unison)

**We praise you God for the heart of Jesus, so filled with your love for this earth.
God-with-Earth, nourished as guests at your table, we are remade, repurposed.
May this food empower us to cherish your creation of which we are a part.**

Keep our hearts warm, our hands open, and our lives ever embracing and embraced by your love. Amen.

***HYMN**

Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom

Sing the World Made New No. 7

Earth is full of wit and wisdom, sounding God's delighted laugh,
from the tiny roly-poly to the treetop-tall giraffe.

All creation sings in wonder; even rocks and trees rejoice
as they join the ringing chorus: echoes of our Maker's voice.

Earth is full of wit and wisdom, woven into harmony.

Ev'ry creature has a purpose, ev'ry flow'r and bumblebee.

Spider, human, redwood, gecko, monkey, chicken, mouse, and snake
live within a single fabric: cloth that only God could make.

Earth is full of wit and wisdom: penguin, platypus, and snail,
cactus, sea slug, oak, and algae, from the microbe to the whale.

In this great and strange creation, with a breath God gives us birth:
born of soil to live as stewards, called to love and serve the earth.

***BENEDICTION**

One: All creatures of our God most high,
let praise resound in earth and sky:

All: Alleluia, alleluia!

One: Bright burning sun with golden beams,
pale silver moon that gently gleams,

All: O praise God! Alleluia!

One: All you with mercy in your heart,
forgiving others, take your part,

All: Alleluia, alleluia!

One: Dear mother earth, you day by day
unfold your blessings on our way:

All: O praise God! Alleluia!

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Thanks to our worship helpers today!

Liturgist: Carol Abrahams

Digital Host: Bill Kirby

Welcome Table: Frances Hockensmith

Cover image by Beth Frentrup



September 11-13, 2026 at Camp Pecometh

Plan to join RUC for a weekend of fun, worship and time together. Join RUC for this over 25-year tradition.

Final payments were due **September 1.**

CABINS: Individual: \$125 each, family of three: \$375, additional family members: \$50 each

RETREAT CENTER: There are 24 hotel-style rooms in the retreat center. \$400 double occupancy, additional family members: \$50 each

PAY IT FORWARD: You may make an extra donation to the Camp Pecometh Scholarship Fund to enable all who want to attend Camp Pecometh by adding an extra little something to your payment, and a note it is to "Pay it Forward!" (There is a memo line in the online donation form to do this.) Thank you!

For more information, or to discuss accommodations, please call Denise Rozell at (301) 787-6814.

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