

The Vision Beautiful

When we hear someone say how blessed they are or how blessed a friend is, we automatically think of how their lives are filled with answered prayers, abundant grace, and equally abundant provision. But when Jesus preached his Sermon on the Mount to the masses, he turned the idea of what a blessing is upside down.

I wonder what the reaction really was when all those who needed to hear an inspirational message from Jesus heard his take on a blessed life instead.

Blessed are you who are poor in spirit. Blessed are you who mourn. Blessed are you who are meek. Blessed are you who hunger. Blessed are you who have been reviled and persecuted. Blessed are you in all the muck of life — my addition, not Jesus'.

I woke up the other the day desperately needing to remember once again that a blessed life is not a charmed life. I needed to know that no matter what this world throws at me or what others might say about me or do to me, that I am blessed because I am a child of God.

In my moments where I feel no one hears me, Jesus is listening. Those days I feel invisible, Jesus sees me. Those days when I really feel as if I hate the world (please tell me I am not alone here), I know that Jesus isn't judging me. Rather, like any understanding friend, my Lord and my Savior, walks alongside me, softening the calluses forming on my heart by a world filled with chaos, anger and violence.

Days like these I need to stop everything and run into the arms of Jesus. I need to feel the safety and security of his redeeming love. I need to hear his beautiful voice reassure my blessedness. For the world will try its best to drag us down, but Jesus is there to always lift us up.

So blessed are you this day. You who hurts. You who has been betrayed. You who are tired. You who are doubting. You who has lost your way, your purpose, you're your faith.

Blessed are you. Period. No questions asked. Why? Because you are a beautiful child of God — seen, heard and loved.

God of grace and great hope, we ask that You bless the brokenness in our lives, putting back together the shattered pieces of dreams or relationships in a new way. And, as You do, may we hear deep in our hearts the reassuring and restorative words that through all of life's ups and downs that we are indeed blessed. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

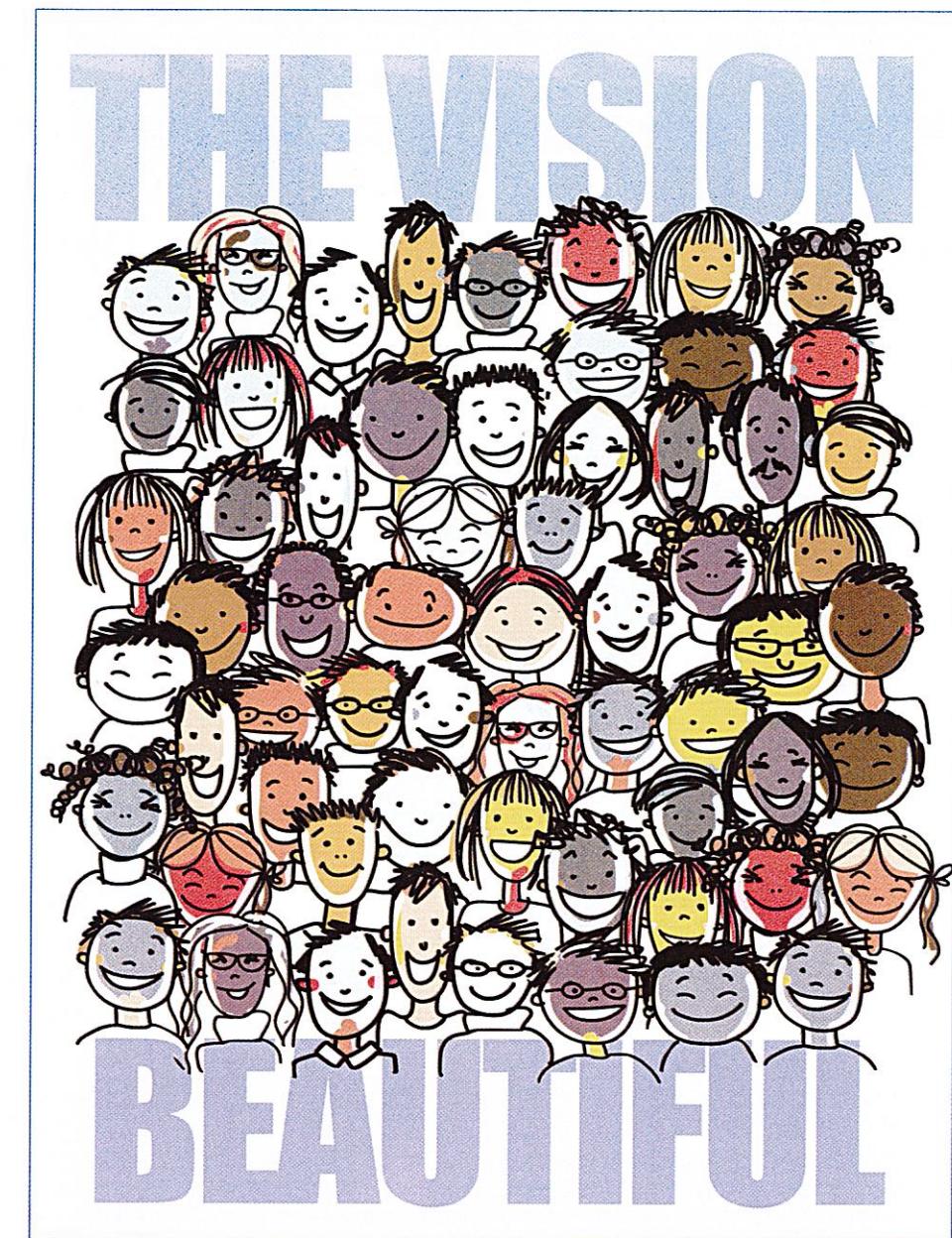
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

8½" x 11" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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St. John's Grace United Church of Christ
1000 S Rolling Road, Catonsville, Maryland 21228
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
February 1, 2026 11:00 AM

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to be a community of faith and a voice of hope following Jesus' way of love and service.

www.stjohnsucmd.com

Nursery care is available during service for young children.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ Please rise in body or in spirit

Congregation reads text in ***bold italic***.

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome and Announcements

Centering Prayer and Silence

Jesus told us that the time is at hand, when the fullness of God's presence will be revealed. Let us anticipate that revelation within our hearts; let us anticipate God's presence with open minds. May we find all of the beauty in the world that surrounds us.

Silent Meditation

Lighting of the Presence Candle

In lighting this candle, we acknowledge that:
God is here, now, everywhere, always.

+Call to Worship

When our hearts are filled with love;

We know God is present.

May we also know that same Presence

When we experience moments of doubt or fear.

When anger rises up within us or around us;

May we find ways to offer God's peace.

+Opening Hymn:

Fairest Lord Jesus

Celeb #87

+Passing of the Peace

Departure to Church School

Invocation (based on Psalm 25)

To You, O God, we lift up our souls.
To You we offer our prayers, even our lives,
And we offer these with thanksgiving.
Make Your ways known to us.
Show us the path on which we should walk.
Lead us in Your truth and teach us.
For You alone are the one God,
The God in whom we trust;
And the One on whom we wait. **Amen.**

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Let us pray together:

You have called us, and we have tried to answer. We know your call invites us to a fullness in life that is beyond our imagination. Your grace is beyond our comprehension and your forgiveness knows no limits. We need your help to live according to these same promises in our relations with each other. We ask to be sensitive to the needs of others and we ask to be mindful of our ability to give, so that we might sustain our effort in reflecting your love to the world. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Words of Grace

Jesus has told us his burden is light. Rest in God's love for us. You can trust in God's care. Do not be afraid. Our faith in these promises brings us a gift in every time and every place. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

The New Testament reading: Micah 6:1-8

Ministry of Music: Christ is With Us Chancel Choir

+The Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

Reflection:

Rev. Jeff Munnis

Hymn of Reflection: Just A Closer Walk With Thee Celeb #564

WE OPEN OURSELVES TO GOD IN GRATITUDE AND PRAYER

Prayers of the Church

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.

WE SHARE OUR GIFTS

Invitation to Generosity:

We live in the abundance of God's love. May we offer this same love to the world, and may we also offer our material gifts to the work of this church. Your offering sustains the work of this church, where we give to the needs of the members, and to the members of the community around us who are in need. We remember that in giving to those in need we are making an offering to God.

Your generous offerings are appreciated and used for continuing the missions of this church.

For electronic giving, a QR code is available in the pews or in your bulletin at the end of the printed worship service.

+Doxology

*We give Thee but Thine own
What e'er the gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.*

*May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive
And gladly as Thou blesses us
To Thee our first fruits give. Amen*

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Words of Institution

We come to this table knowing that Jesus instituted the sacrament of communion at a Passover meal, through his call for us to remember him, and in remembering him we recognize that he revealed to us a God of truth and love, a God of presence, our God of mercy and forgiveness. He took bread, blessed it, and shared it. We have learned that in our sharing, the elements we share become sacred. The bread and drink, through our prayers and blessing, become gifts emblematic of God's abundance and providence.

Blessing of the Elements

Pour out your Spirit on us and these gifts of bread and drink, so in sharing we recognize Christ in our midst. This offering of praise and thanksgiving is an offering of us to you. Hasten the day when the prophets' dreams come to pass: when justice rolls down like waters and nations no longer threaten each other, neither shall they learn war anymore. This we pray by the authority of Jesus and in your holy grace. Amen.

The Invitation for Communion

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. This is bread and beverage for the journey. In this church community, we share an inclusive communion, which means you need not be a member of this congregation or any community of faith to join us at the table. We believe Jesus Christ sets the table and Christ welcomes all. Likewise, no one is required by the host to participate. Now, let all who wish to share in this meal, partake, for God's table is ready.

Receiving the Bread and the Cup

Gluten free elements are available

*The trays of covenant include – inner circle of grape juice
outer circles are wine.*

Parents, please help your children in selecting.

Please hold the elements. We will commune together

Words for partaking the bread: The bread of life

*Words for partaking the wine: A cup to remember Jesus
Christ our Lord.*

***Please take communion cup
and dispose of it in the Narthex after worship.***

Hymn During Communion: Be Thou My Vision NCH #451

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks for the gifts we have received during this communion of remembrance. We are sustained by the spiritual power of your presence. Your presence strengthens us, gives us hope, inspires us to share your love. May we grow in love, may we grow in our ability to see and understand your truth. Help us hold sacred the covenant promised by Jesus that you are in us, and we are in you, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen.

WE GO OUT TO LIVE AND TO SERVE

+Commission and Blessing

What Does the Lord Require of You FWS #2174

+Closing Hymn: Arise, Your Light is Come NCH #164

+Benediction:

We welcome you this morning, and invite you to return, and worship with us every Sunday morning at 11:00 AM

*For your convenience you can scan our QR code
to contribute electronically.*



Name Tags for Members and Friends!

Members and friends are asked to wear name tags for worship time because they help other people. It is also helpful for folks who may know the face but not the name of another. Wearing a name tag is voluntary but shows that you care about others.

If you need a name tag, please ask a greeter or usher at the welcome desk to fill out a badge request slip!

St. John's Grace United Church of Christ
Stjohnsucmd.com
410-744-5700
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Senior Pastor and Interim Minister: Rev Jeff Munnis Phone: 415-747-9114
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Office Manager: Barbara Burck Phone: 443-789-2443
Email: barbara@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Connections...

Connecting our community through prayers, thoughts, and actions – no matter where we are today!

WE HOLD in LOVE and PRAYER:

Please keep these friends and loved ones in your prayers! If there is someone you would like added to our list, let Pastor Jeff or Barbara know. The church email is welcome@stjohnsgraceucc.org.

Those added to the prayer list will remain for three months before being removed. If prayers need to be continued for another three months, please let Barbara know your request.

Continuing Prayers

Lois Hotchkiss
Adrian Kavanaugh
Phyllis Dean
The Behrens Family
Kathy Crout
Addy L.
Family & friends of Debby Carr
Kathy Collins
Sharon Hamilton
Jerry Prinn
Emily Arnold & Brandon Boyd
Lois Benson
Sharon Hayes

Serving Our Country

Michael Barbarino Joe Clark
Andrew Robey Jon Fuller
Ty Smith Jay Robey
Tom Myers Josh Tullius
John Howard Jason Shoemaker

Hospice

Assisted Living
Doris Bush
Virginia Hoffman

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Girl Scout Cookie Sale Booth	<i>Sun, Feb 8th</i>	<i>9:30 – 11 am</i>	Parlor
Fundraising Meeting	<i>Sun, Feb 8th</i>	<i>12:00 pm</i>	Meeting Rm
Sorrento Restaurant Fundraiser	<i>Sun, Feb 15th</i>	<i>Noon to evening</i>	Arbutus
Ministries Council Mtg	<i>Tues, Feb 17th</i>	<i>6:30 pm</i>	Zoom
Board of Trustees Meeting	<i>Tues, Feb 17th</i>	<i>7:30 pm</i>	Zoom
Ash Wednesday Service	<i>Wed, Feb 18th</i>	<i>7:00 pm</i>	Sanctuary
Serving at Westside Men's	<i>Mon, Feb 23rd</i>	<i>Lunch & Dinner</i>	
Vacation Bible School	<i>June 22 – 28th</i>	<i>Save the Date!</i>	

Governing Body Minutes

Our governing body consists of the Board of Trustees and the Ministries Council. Meetings are held monthly via Zoom. Interested parties are welcome. Minutes of the meetings are posted in the office hallway. Contact the office if you would like a paper copy or email copy.

View Past Services on our Website

If you missed a worship service here at St. John's Grace, you can now view the service on our website! Go to www.stjohnsucmd.com Worship/ Online Worship tab and scroll down to the service you would like to view. They are on our YouTube channel so you can subscribe if you like.

Deadline for Submitting Announcements

Announcements or changes to announcements need to be submitted by noon on Tuesday prior to the Sunday service to be included in the bulletin. Email to barbara@stjohnsgraceucc.org.



Annual Congregational Meeting – February 1, 2026

Announcing our winter Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 10:45 am prior to the worship service held at 11:00 am. The agenda, minutes from the last meeting and our Annual Report for 2026 have been emailed and is available by the greeter desk.

Girl Scout Cookie Sale at Church

Our Girl Scouts will have cookies available to buy in the Parlor on Sunday, February 8th from 9:30 am to 11 am!



Get your favorites before they are gone!

Thank you for supporting Girl Scouts.

Restaurant Fundraiser is now in February!

Join us on Sunday, February 15th as we gather to enjoy good eats at **Sorrento of Arbutus Pizza Italian Subs** – **5401 East Drive, Arbutus, MD 21227.**



Starting at noon until evening. **Includes Valentines Day specials!** – mention St. John's Grace and a percentage will be donated back to the church.



Church School every Sunday

Calling all children! We invite you to share in worship together with your children at the 11:00 am service. After opening hymns and prayers, the children depart for Church School for the remainder and continue learning about God's Word through storytelling, hands-on activities and fellowship.

Westside Men's Shelter Donation Needs



- 1) **Warm socks, hats and gloves** are needed this winter for the men at the shelter. Donation bins are in the hallway.
- 2) **There is an ongoing need for shower shoes** (flip flops) and these can be given and collected at any time into the bin in Mission Hallway!



Westside Men's Shelter Mission – Now Serving

Can you spare 1½ hours to make 100 people smile? No cooking, no cleanup, just a helping hand and a smile!

If you answer yes to this question, sign up to serve the men at Westside Men's Shelter for lunch or dinner on **Monday, Feb. 23**. The signup sheet is available in the narthex.

If you cannot serve, desserts are welcome. And they really make the men smile! See Connie if you have questions. If the interest is there, other dates will be coming up for this mission outreach opportunity.

For serving lunch, arrive at the shelter by 11:30 am. For serving dinner, arrive at 5:30 pm. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex.



Spring Raffle Tickets - Now

For this fundraiser you can win two tickets to the Orioles Home Opener game on March 26th. Second prize is a gift certificate to Matthew's 1600 restaurant in Catonsville. See insert for more information!



CEA: January is for Our "Souper Sunday" Drive

All kinds of soup are welcome and needed:

Tomato, chicken, veggie, cream, seafood.

Easy-open or need a can opener.

Cans can be big, small, tall, or squat.

Soup can be for a snack or hardy enough for a meal.

What kind of soup do you like? Say a prayer for the person who receives your gift of a can of soup.

We are off and running with our soup collections for CEA. We have all of February to go yet. In 2024 we collected 1,230 cans and in 2025 the total was 653. Can we at least meet last year's amount???

On the last trip Roy and Tom (from CEA) delivered 152 cans! Will you do your part to put a hot meal or snack of nutritious soup on the table of someone who is hungry? Please be generous as you shop this week.



Mission & Outreach Transitional Hold-Alls

The National Capital Treatment and Recovery Center (a nonprofit organization based in Arlington & Alexandria, VA) provides substance abuse and mental health treatment to those who need these services. One of their programs is an 84-bed residential treatment center for men who are in need. When admitted, these men usually have their belongings in paper bags.

You can help them feel prouder when they leave with the donation of gently used or new backpack, duffle bag, or piece of luggage.

Please forward donations for Ken or Charlene Mowery.



TIME for WINTER

CLEAN OUT

Used Clothing Drop-Off Shed

Sponsored By:

St John's Grace United Church of Christ

With the help of Turnkey Enterprises, LLC

Location:

**1000 S. Rolling Road, Catonsville, MD 21228
(Parking Lot)**

Items Accepted:

All clothing, shoes, sneakers, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, drapes, and stuffed toys.

(Your donation will not be cut up or shredded)

(Please – no rags, fabric scrapes, toys, or household goods, **please understand that the above-mentioned items are a hardship and expense to dispose of.**)

Turnkey Enterprises, LLC:

Turnkey Enterprises LLC is a for-profit company that partners with non-profit organizations in communities to help support their fundraising needs by recycling unwanted clothing. The clothing collected is used as clothing, not cut into rags. Turnkey services each location and pays the sponsoring organization by the pound for the unused items.

www.turnkey-enterprises.com

Help us keep your donation clean and dry

Please put your donation in plastic bags. Thank you.

There are receipt forms in a slot in the mailbox in the hallway outside the office



Happy Birthday,
February Babies

2	Jim Benson
	Coraline Weaver
3	Michael Doherty
	Brandon Esser
8	Tyler Rubalcaba
12	Ann Dement
	Zerriah Pettie
14	Doris Bush
	Quinn Mowery
19	Jonathan Fletcher
	Paul Lee
21	Michael Barbarino
	Steve Lauer
22	Jess Hayden
	Ron Pettie
25	Lil Daukzsewicz
26	Landon Pettis
28	Gail Matthews

Happy birthday also, to those we may have missed!

ST. JOHN'S GRACE UCC

1000 South Rolling Road, Catonsville, MD 21228

2026 SPRING RAFFLE

\$5.00/Donation

**Chance to Win Orioles Home Opener Tickets bundle
or Matthews' 1600 \$100 gift card!**

SAMPLE TICKET

SAMPLE TICKET

SAMPLE TICKET



St. John's Grace United Church of Christ Spring Fundraiser Raffle

**1st Prize: Two tickets to Orioles Home Opener
plus \$50 Orioles eGift Card and more!**

Thursday, March 26, 2026 @ 3:05pm – Seats 282 Picnic Perch

2nd Prize: Matthew's 1600 in Catonsville - \$100 Gift Card

Drawing Held Sunday, March 15, 2026

Winners do not need to be present.

Donation: \$5.00



PICNIC PERCH
ALL-INCLUSIVE

- PEANUTS
- POPCORN
- PRETZELS
- NACHO BAR
- GARDEN AND SEASONAL SALAD
- HOT DOGS AND SAUSAGES
- PULLED PORK BBQ
- FRESH CUT FRUIT
- SWEET SELECTIONS
- ASSORTED SOFT DRINKS AND WATER

MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE



*Thank you for supporting
St. John's Grace fundraiser.*

FIRST PRIZE:
Two Orioles Home Opener tickets in the Picnic Perch, Club Level, Section 282, Row 2, Seats 19 and 20, \$50 eGift Card, and some sway!

Raffle tickets can be purchased from Laura Prinn, call 410-897-2534. Zelle, PayPal, and Venmo accepted.

Or call the church office at 410-744-5700 to schedule a time to stop by St. John's Grace Church and purchase raffles from our Office Manager.