

St. John's Grace United Church of Christ

1000 S Rolling Road, Catonsville, Maryland 21228

Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 15, 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.

Mission Statement:

We serve God as Christ called us, to love our neighbor and minister to everyone. We welcome you to join us no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey.

Nursery care is available during service for young children.
During the school year, Church School is offered during service after the Passing of the Peace

ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ Please rise in body or in spirit Congregation reads text in ***bold italic.***

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude: Lord, I Lift Your Name on High FWS #2088

Welcome and Announcements

Centering Prayer and Silence

O Holy One, may we be united with you in our silence, may our few words bring illumination and peace, may our presence reflect your presence, may our practice of silence strengthen our ability to love each other and the world.

Silent Meditation

Lighting of the Presence Candle

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

+Opening Hymn: We Are Called FWS #2172

+Invocation and Call to Worship

God, you have searched us and known us.

You know when we sit and when we rise, you know our thoughts.

You know our strength and our weakness.

Before our words rise in prayer you have already heard our hearts call to you.

We yearn to come to you in love to learn of your mercy and wisdom.

Search our hearts and help us face the darkness in us, so we may be enlightened.

Ministry of Music Simple Gifts Bell Choir

Prayer for Transformation

We give kindness through the gift of your Grace, through the working of your power. Everything that is done is completed through a divine order created by you, this was also accomplished in Christ Jesus, in whom we have placed our confidence and faith. Because of this we bend our knees to you, from whom each family in the heavens and on earth is named. We pray that from the abundance of your glory, and through spirit, you may grant to us all the confirmation of our inner being and our heart's faith. We are rooted and grounded in your love and we pray that we may have the power to understand the breath, the length, the height, and depth that love spans. This love surpasses knowledge and through the life given to us by you we are filled with the fullness of love. By grace we have been saved through faith, not from our earthly works, therefore we hold no pride. We are your word, transformed and re-born in Christ, and we have been prepared for good works, so that in love we might live. Amen.

The Prayer for New Life

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray:

Through Jesus Christ we see revealed the union between your divine essence and the world in which we live and move. Help us to be mindful and thankful, aware that our knowing and seeing depend on the life that you give. May we wake to the light of each day with our heart and our mind clear, open, and ready to be a channel of your love and understanding, to each other, and in the work we perform. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Eternal Silent One we receive from you healing and wholeness. We are restored when we acknowledge your presence. You are the love from which our love comes, and you are the power from which we become grounded in your Grace. We are blessed by you; we give thanks to you. Amen.

Children's Sermon

All children are invited to come to the front of the church for a special conversation.

+Passing of the Peace

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
In my soul.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Hebrew Bible: Isiah 30:12-18

Ministry of Music: For Those Tears I Died Chris Dixon

+The Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:25-45

Reflection: Rev. Jeff Munnis

Hymn of Reflection: Together We Serve FWS #2175

Prayers of the People and the Church

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:

God calls us to be a light to the world. We make our offering as witness to God's love at work among us. In gratitude for the gifts we have received, and in hope for the light God is still bringing into the world. Amen.

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

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen

We Go Out to Live and to Serve

+Commission and Blessing

May God bring you joy and awaken your hearts.
May love and blessings pour through all of our being.
Free us from attachments and desires.
That we may become good neighbors,
Giving of ourselves and offering God's love to the world.

+Closing Hymn: Soon and Very Soon Celeb #757

+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.



Visitor Badges are available at the Greeter Desk

Help us get to know you and welcome you!

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!

Open and Affirming Covenant of St. John's Grace UCC

St. John's Grace UCC is a caring, unconditionally loving, open and affirming faith community that welcomes ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE. In Luke 10:27 Jesus says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself."

In that spirit and in accordance with our vision to be a voice of hope following Jesus' way of love and service, we covenant with God and each other to extend our extravagant welcome to persons of all ages, abilities, races, cultures, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, family configurations, and spiritual or religious traditions. We affirm all people as children of God by nurturing their gifts and inviting them to participate in every aspect of our church family including membership, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys.

We are committed to continuing the work of inclusivity and discovering ways to live out our support and respect for all people as God's beloved children, as we strive to be part of the solution to heal the brokenness of our world

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

Family and friends of Christina Thomas
Ken and Charlene Mowery
Family and friends of Doris Bush
Family and friends of Mary Weaver
Sandy Duncan
Family of David Yates
Betty Ewing & Bob, Jr.
Rosemary Woods & Janese Murray
Family of Linda Ballard
Family of Nicole Webb
Family of Charlene Stratton
Jessica Hayden

Serving Our Country

Joe Clark
Jason Shoemaker
Michael Barbarino
Josh Tullius

Assisted Living

Virginia Hoffman

St. John's Grace United Church of Christ
Stjohnsuccmd.com
410-744-5700
welcome@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Senior Pastor and Interim Minister: Rev Jeff Munnis
Email: revjeffmunnis@stjohnsgraceucc.org
Office Manager: Barbara Burck
Email: barbara@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Ministries Council Mtg	*Tues, Nov 17th*	*6:30 pm*	*Zoom*
Board of Trustees Mtg	*Tues, Nov 17th*	*7:00 pm*	*Zoom*
Special Congregational Mtg	*Sun, Nov 22nd*	*10:45 am before worship*	
Hanging of the Greens	*Sun, Nov 29th*	*After worship*	
Cantata & Special Hospitality	*Sun, Dec 13th*	*After worship*	

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. 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.stjohnsuccmd.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.

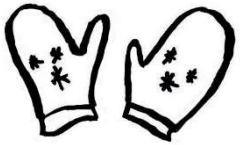
Special Congregational Mtg – Sunday November 22nd

A special congregational meeting has been called for November 22nd for the approval of major repairs needed for the heating and cooling system at the mansion. Notice and a ballot have been emailed out.
Ballots are also available in the narthex. Please turn in ballots prior to the meeting or during the meeting.

New Member Class:



If you, or someone you know, is interested in becoming of member of St. John's Grace please meet with Rev. Jeff directly; in person or via email.



Halethorpe Elementary School Winter Mission

Our winter school mission is
"HATS, GLOVES, SCARVES AND SOCKS"

School age children to young adult – no toddlers or babies.

Please drop off donations in the mission bins by TODAY Sunday, November 15th. Monetary donations can be given to Tina Hamilton.

Attention Shoppers: Dollar Tree has warm socks, gloves, and hats for $1.50!



Our Live Nativity is Coming!

Calling all angels, magi and shepherds!

Our annual Drive Thru Live Nativity event will be Saturday, December 19th between 5-7pm.

Volunteers of ALL AGES are needed! See Michele Rolf to find out how you can help. Behind the scenes help is needed also.

Donations this year will be going to SWES – Southwest Emergency Services in Arbutus.

Hanging of the Greens – Help Needed



Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 29th after worship to help decorate the church for the Christmas season! There will be something to do for everyone! See Sandy McCawley with any questions.

Christmas Poinsettias for Sanctuary

Every Christmas, we decorate our sanctuary with beautiful flowers purchased by our members and friends in honor or memory of our loved ones whose names will be listed in the Christmas Eve worship bulletin. The form for ordering or contributing to the purchase of the poinsettias is in the bulletin!



CEA: November is for Salmon!

Cans or Single Serve packets welcome

As usual, CEA welcomes ANY food, at any time!
CEA can use any donations so please pick up whatever you can for our neighbors!
When Faith Goes to Market – It Always Takes a Basket!

Attention Shoppers: Aldi's has salmon. Walmart has small cans of salmon and salmon in pouches. ($2.25-2. 54)

Always available ways to help CEA:

Include a donation marked 'CEA' in the offering plate.

Go to the 'Donations' page on our website and use the CEA button to donate via credit/debit card.

Gift cards are accepted to enable CEA to purchase needed foods.

Please stop by our new website: www.catonsvillehelp.org for lots of information about CEA and your community!

Helping Hands Needed – CEA Donations



Our CEA donations are picked up on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month – so on those preceding Sundays, accumulated goods need to be packed up and left by the narthex door.

Connie has been the point person and is very grateful for all the help so far. She will be having hand surgery in November and would like to alert folks to be extra aware to help out.



Westside Men's Shelter Donation Needs

There is an ongoing need for shower shoes (flip flops) and these can be given and collected at any time into the bin in the Mission Hallway.



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, men usually have their belongings in paper bags. ***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.

TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 15, 2026 **Matthew 25:14-30**

Extravagant Opportunity

What if Jesus were telling this story now? Might it sound a little like this?

So, the reign of God is like a businesswoman, preparing to leave for the airport on a business trip, who called three of her employees into the conference office. The employees sat somewhat nervously around the conference table, not sure what to expect. The businesswoman arrived in a hurry and took her customary place at the head of the table. Only then did they notice the large box that sat in front of her on the table.

Then, one by one, she pulled three items out of the box. To the first employee, she gave a small but powerful video camera. That employee immediately left the conference room and began conducting interviews with her coworkers, asking them what had brought them to work at that company. She was amazed about what she learned about people she worked with every day. This employee uploaded the videos onto social media and a couple of them even went viral.

To the second employee, the boss gave a compact typewriter in a carrying case. The next day, during lunch, he offered to type a poem about any subject his coworkers might choose. One by one, his coworkers told him stories about the people they loved, the animals that made them laugh, the mountains that inspired them. And this second employee wrote poems for them all. They shared the poems with each other, delighted to get to know each other in this new way.

To the third employee, the businesswoman gave a pencil. But the third employee didn't know what to do. She stayed in her office alone many nights, just looking at that pencil and wondering what the boss could have meant by giving her such a small and worthless gift.

When the boss came back, she praised the social media campaign of the first employee and thanked the second employee for the increase in morale and sense of comradeship in the office. But with the third employee, who, with a sheepish expression, tried to give her back the pencil, the boss was visibly disappointed. "There are so many ways you could have used this tool, but you chose to do nothing. This is a place for people to take risks and express their creativity, but you have twiddled your thumbs. Next time, the gift will go to someone else altogether."

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Every Christmas, we decorate our sanctuary with beautiful flowers purchased by our members and friends, in honor of, or in memory of, our loved ones whose names will be listed in the Christmas Eve worship bulletin.



Donations for the 6" pot red poinsettias will be $12.00 per plant. If you prefer to make a memorial contribution instead of ordering a poinsettia, you may do so.

Please complete the request on the reverse side of this form. Indicate the number of plants being purchased.

Options:

- In Person - in the coming weeks, checks can be made out to St John's Grace UCC and left in the offering basket with your completed form or dropped off at the church.
- Mail – mail the check and form to the office.

Plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve worship service.

The deadline for ordering is December 13th.

Questions: Check with Barbara at 443-789-2443 or barbara@stjohnsgraceucc.org

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Color	How many?	@ $12.00 each =	
RED			$
		Memorial Donation toward Flowers	$
		Total Amount Enclosed	$

****Please Print Names Clearly****

Deadline for requests: December 13th

In Honor of	By
In Memory of	**By**