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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of

The United Church of Christ

October 22, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME

Daphne Stitt, Deacon

PRELUDE

Eileen Sypher, organist

INTROIT

Sanctuary

R. Scruggs

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Japanese Hymn)

Make a gift of your holy Word, O God, let it pour on our head and hearts like your rain.

Let it fill our lives each day, touch our hunger and our thirst, the deep suffering that we know on life's lonely, wandering way.

Let your Word come into our lives, as your winds blow over all the earth we pray.

Let us be fully free from the sins that keep us bound, made pure by your Spirit's gift of resounding victory.

Grant all people your holy Word. Quench the thirsty earth as the first morning dew.

Let it teach love's healing way, in our war-torn suffering world. Let it bind us one to one toward a just and peaceful day. Amen.

*HYMN

I Love to Tell the Story

360

I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story; 'tis pleasant to repeat what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet. I love to tell the story, for some have never heard the message of salvation from God's own holy word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest. And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Refrain

*INVOCATION

Holy God, this morning we ask that you would brighten our hearts by your presence. Put a smile in our spirit and let us know how deeply and wonderfully we are loved. There have been times, you know, when we have felt completely unlovable, but still you come to us with the gospel: your word of encouragement, your word of hope, your word of truth. Touch us with that word in this hour, that word made flesh, that word which is salvation itself, Jesus our Redeemer, in whose name we pray, Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Psalm 121

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

ANTHEM

Dona Nobis Pacem

Schubert/Nygaard Jr

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

John 1.1-14

(p. 968)

SERMON

"An Old Friend"

Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

(Psalm 119.105)

An Old Friend

Biblical passages included in today's sermon

Psalm 100 (p. 541)

Exodus 20.1-17 (p. 65)

Deuteronomy 5.6-21 (p. 161)

Romans 1.3-4 (p. 1026)

Psalm 19.8 (p. 489)

Psalm 119 (p. 555)

Isaiah 2.4 (p. 618)

Joel 3.10 (p. 833)

Micah 4.3 (p. 849)

Ecclesiastes 12.12 (p. 610)

Psalm 50.9 (p. 509)

Numbers 21.16 (p. 139)

Numbers 22.28-30 (p. 140)

John 1.12-13 (p. 968)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY

Nearer My God to Thee

*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*

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

POEM

The Bible is an antique Volume (1545)

Emily Dickinson

*HYMN

Deep in the Shadows of the Past

293

Deep in the shadows of the past, far out from settled lands, some nomads traveled with their God across the desert sands. The dawning hope of humankind by them was sensed and shown: a promise calling them ahead, a future yet unknown.

While others bowed to changeless gods they met a mystery, invisible, without a name: "I AM WHAT I WILL BE:" And by their tents, around their fires, in story, song and law, they praised, remembered, handed on a past that promised more.

From Exodus to Pentecost the promise changed and grew, while some, remembering the past, recorded what they knew, or with their letters and laments, their prophecy and praise, recovered, kindled, and expressed new hope for changing days.

For all the writings that survived, for leaders long ago, who sifted, copied, and preserved the Bible that we know, give thanks, and find its story yet our promise, strength and call, the model of emerging faith, alive with hope for all.

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Irish Blessing

A. Lovelace

LOOKING AHEAD

October 22	5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen	October 26	8:30 am 10:00 am 5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Yoga Backpack Program Scouts – Wolf Den Choir Rehearsal
October 23	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	October 27	8:15 am	Coffee Hours at Simon's Marketplace
October 24	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts – AOL	October 28	9:00 am to Noon	Electronics Recycling
October 25	6:30 pm	Scouts - Webelos	October 29	10:00 am 11:00 am 5:00 pm	Worship Council Meeting Soup Kitchen

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome! No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at the United Church of Chester, an Open and Affirming Church and a member of the United Church of Christ. **The United Church of Chester is centered in Christ's love, embracing, nurturing, serving all, and committed to justice and peace.**

The Deacon for the month of October is **Daphne Stitt**. Our Greeter for today is **Sue Germini-Humble**. Flowers on the altar were provided by **Sue Germini-Humble**. Coffee hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay**.

The **Outreach Committee** is designating the month of October to collect Adams foods cards in any denomination for the upcoming holiday season. Please consider picking up a food card. Any questions please contact Sue Germini-Humble at 860-395-4340 or the church office.

Tellabration 2023 is returning on November 5th at 4:00 pm. There are sign-up sheets in the narthex and Fellowship Hall for this event. Any questions please contact Margie Warner at 860-227-7391.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday – Friday 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday - Friday 9am-1pm