THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
January 22, 2023 10:00 a.m.
Third Sunday after Epiphany

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Deb Calamari, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Trumpet Tune* — Handel

INTROIT — *Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place* — L. Wolfe

CALL TO WORSHIP — (*Japanese Hymn)*

Make a gift of your holy Word, let it pour on our heads 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 — *O Christ, the Word Incarnate* — 295

INVOCATION — (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

We thank you for your church, founded upon your Word, that challenges us to do more than sing and pray, but go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers depended on us and not upon you. Help us to realize that humanity was created to shine like the stars and live on through all eternity. Keep us, we pray, in perfect peace. Help us to walk together, sing together, and live together, until that day when all God's creatures will rejoice in one common band of humanity in the reign of our Lord and our God, we pray. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON — 1 Kings 7.1-7, 18

[1]Solomon was building his own house for thirteen years, and he finished his entire house. [2]He built the House of the Forest of the Lebanon one hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars. [3]It was roofed with cedar on the forty-five rafters, fifteen in each row, which were on the *pillars*. [4]There were window frames in the three rows, facing each other in the three rows. [5]*All the doorways and doorposts had four-sided frames, opposite, facing each other in the three rows.* [6]He made the Hall of *Pillars* fifty cubits long and thirty cubits wide. There was a porch in front with *pillars*, and a canopy in front of them. [7]He made the Hall of the Throne where he was to pronounce judgement, the Hall of Justice, covered with cedar from floor to *ceiling*. [18]He made the *pillars* with two rows round each lattice-work to cover the capitals that were above the *pomegranates*; he did the same with the other capital.

ANTHEM — *We Are Not Alone* — P. Choplin
Diane Adams, soloist

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON — Matthew 5.21-30

SERMON — *"Happily Nuanced: The Myth of Biblical Literalism"* — Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away… And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell."
(Matthew 5.29, 30)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

ANTHEM — *My Faith Looks Up To Thee* — L. Mason

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER *("trespasses")*

POEM — *Poem 1545* — Emily Dickenson

*HYMN — *Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?* — 374

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE — *Sent Forth by God's Blessing* — (Tune-Ash Grove)

LOOKING AHEAD

January 22	**11:00 am**	**Deacon's Meeting**
	1:00 pm	**Phyllis Webb Funeral Service**
	5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen
January 23	5:00 pm	Irish Dance Troup practice
January 24	6:30 pm	Scouts – Webelos
	4:00 pm	Endowment Committee meeting (Zoom)
January 25	10:00 am	Backpack Program
	6:00 pm	Scouts – Bear Den
	7:00 pm	Chester Garden Club
January 27	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
January 28	TBD	Irish Dance Troup practice
January 29	**10:00 am**	**Worship**
	5:00 pm	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**.

This deacon for the month of January is **Debra Calamari.** The greeter this morning is **Barbara-Jan Wilson**. **Tim Napier** and **Barbara-Jan Wilson** give the flowers to celebrate their sisters, Connie and Sarah Louise. Coffee Hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay** and **Claudia Epright**.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday-Friday 8:30 am-12:30 pm, other times by appointment

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

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The United Church of Chester

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Church

January 22, 2023

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O Christ, the Word Incarnate

O Christ, the Word incarnate, O wisdom from on high, O truth unchanged, unchanging, O light of our dark sky, we praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page, a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

Your people hold this treasure from you, its source divine, a light that to all ages through-out the earth will shine. It is the chart and compass that all life's voyage through, mid mists and rocks and tempest, still guides, O Christ, to you.

O make your church, dear Savior, a lamp of burnished gold, to bear before the nations your true light as of old; O teach your wandering pilgrims by this their path to trace, till, cloud and darkness ended, they see you face to face.

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road; we are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony, born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.