THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
Second Sunday of Advent

WELCOME — Jennifer Gill, Deacon

PRELUDE

INTROIT — *Carol of the Winter Wind* — R. Lowrey, J. Martin

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH — Diane Lindsay & Peggy Phillips (insert)

Leader: Today is the Second Sunday of Advent - the Sunday of Peace.

People: Our peace is found in God and in the son, Jesus Christ. John the Baptist and all the prophets remind us, that to receive peace we must be prepared for it.

Leader: We light this candle today to remind us that Christ is the Prince of Peace, the one promised from the beginning of the world. We thank God for the hope given us and for the peace Christ bestows.

(Light the First and Second Candles)

All: O God of Peace, Emmanuel, we pray you to send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the day and the hour of Christ's appearing. Work in our hearts at this time and help us prepare ourselves for the peace that Jesus brings - the inner peace that tells us that we are united with you, and the outer peace which will come when Christ does. Bless our worship that it may be pleasing to you, and bless us that we may prove to be your faithful servants. Amen.

(Sing verse 2, *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,* # 119)

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood, Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood, he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.

*HYMN *People, Look East* 116

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today – Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there. Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look east and sing today – Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look east and sing today – Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth. Set ev'ry peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look east and sing today – Love, the Lord, is on the way.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of the loving heart, we confess to you those places in our hearts where we have refused you entrance: people we have refused to love; habits we never get around to changing; good things we have left undone and ways in which we hurt you, ourselves, and others. Come to us in the light of your Christ. Shine on those places we had hidden from you. Show us new ways to live. Sweep clean the rooms of our hearts, that Christ may find a home among us. Be known within and among us now and forever; Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

APOCRYPHA LESSON Baruch 5.1-9

ANTHEM *Enniscorthy Carol* E. Alwyn

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In the house of the Lord there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Whoever would come to God may come through me. If you know me, you will know the Lord also. From now on you have both known and seen the Lord. 'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will come in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to God who is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; but I do as I have been commanded, for you know I love the Lord. Rise, let us be on our way.

SERMON *"A Little Peace of Joy"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God."
(Baruch 5.1)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Advent Kyrie* J. Parker, D. Lantz

*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 AND LORD'S PRAYER *("trespasses")*

POEM *From Blossoms* Li Young-Lee (1957 -)

*HYMN *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* 121

Come, though long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Carol of the Winter Wind* R. Lowrey, J. Martin

LOOKING AHEAD

December 10	5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen	December 14	10:00 am 5:30 pm 6:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Backpack Program Scouts – Wolf Den Scouts – Bear Den **Choir Rehearsal**
December 11	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	December 15	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours The Villager**
December 12	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts – L&T	December 16	**10:00 am**	**Stuff-A-Cruiser**
December 13	6:30 pm	Scouts - Webelos	December 17	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Cantata** 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 December is **Jennifer Gill.** Our Greeter for today is **Laurel Johnson.** Flowers on the altar were provided by **Margie Warner** in celebration of our church family with special love to the UCC Choir. Coffee hour is being hosted by **Peggy Phillips**.

The Remembrance Tree is in the narthex. Please add the name of a loved one to the tree that we will include in prayer in early January.

Offering envelopes for 2024 are available in the Narthex. We have ordered fewer boxes this year, so your number may have changed. If you do not find your name on a box, please see Diane Lindsay, Financial Secretary.

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

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

The Outreach Committee is supporting several groups this holiday season. Below are the various ways that you can have an opportunity to help someone in need this year:

Holiday Gift Tags

Working with the local Chester social worker, families have requested specific gift items this year. The gift tags are located in the narthex. Select a tag(s) – please tell Sue Germini-Humble which tag(s) you are taking and return the item unwrapped by Sunday, December 17th.

Covenant to Care

Collecting Amazon and Walmart gift cards in any amount for the Covenant to Care/Middletown DCF in Middletown. Please return any gift cards to by Sunday, December 17th.

Stuff-A-Cruiser

Collecting new, unwrapped toys for any children from now until December 16th.

Clothing Drive

Collecting new clothing for any children of any age. Specifically, we are looking for hats, mittens or gloves, sweats (tops & bottoms), pajamas and socks. These will be distributed to those in need. Please return any items by Sunday, December 17th