THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 24, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve

A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

WELCOME		Rev. W. Alan Froggatt
PRELUDE	*Sleep Little Tiny King*	D. Besig
INTROIT	*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*	J. Carter

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE Diane Adams & Jordan Adams Sack
Reader: "Do not be afraid, for behold: I bring you good news of a great joy for all the people; to you is born, in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord."

All: And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among God's children."

(All five candles are lit)

All: Holy God, on this night of nights, let our voices join the heavenly choir, shouting our Hallelujahs and praising your name, because the glory given to you reflects on the mighty and the lowly alike. Peace on earth, good will to all. Amen.

(Sing verse 1, *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,* # 119)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand, Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

*CAROL *O Come, All Ye Faithful* 132

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him, born the King of angels; O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest; O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger, we would embrace thee with love and awe; who would not love thee, loving us so dearly? O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of th'Eternal, now in flesh appearing; O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

LESSON Isaiah 7.10-14 Jordan Adams Sack
Isaiah 9.2-7 Rick Holloway

CAROLS *O Little Town of Bethlehem* 151

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth! And praises sing to God the King, and peace to us on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Joy to the World 134

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; let earth her songs employ; let fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

ANTHEM *Rise Up Shepherds in the Night!* M. Haydn

LESSON Isaiah 11.1-6 Annabelle Jane Napier

CAROLS *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* 137

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! The herald angels sing. "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the ever lasting Lord! Late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity, pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heavenborn Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Rightousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise all souls on earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

What Child is This, Who, Laid to Rest 153

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies the child in manger bare where ox and ass are feeding? Give heed, draw near, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrhh, come, rich and poor, to own him; the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring him praise, the babe, the son of Mary.

LESSON	Matthew 1.18-25	Diane Lindsay
POEM	*First Coming*	Madeline L'Engle
LESSON	Luke 1.39-56	Ella Blythe Froggatt

CAROL *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* 149

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold; "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven great news we bring." The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world; above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long, beneath the angel strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong; and we, through bitter wars, hear not the lovesong which they bring: O hush the noise and end the strife, to hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow, look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing; O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold, when with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold, when peace shall over all the earth its

ancient splendors fling, and the whole word send back the song which now the angels sing.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Hush, My Babe* W. Rogers

LESSON Luke 2.1-20 Ed Sypher

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

INCREASE OF LIGHT

*HYMN *Silent Night, Holy Night*

Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright. 'Round yon virgin Mother and Child Holy infant so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream from heaven afar; Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia! Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night. Son of God, love's pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face. With the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus, Lord at Thy birth. Jesus, Lord at Thy birth

PEAL OF THE CHRISTMAS BELL