Reverend W. Alan Froggatt, Pastor & Teacher
Every Member of the Congregation, Ministers
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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 31, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
First Sunday of Christmastide

WELCOME — Jennifer Gill, Deacon

PRELUDE — *The Shepherd's Farewell* "l'Enface du Christ" — H. Berlioz

CALL TO WORSHIP

At every time, and in every place, God has promised to be present with us.

God hallows the times of our lives, and sanctifies the places where we live and move.

At the threshold of a new year, we are reminded that God offers us every opportunity to change, where change is needed;

And God also commends us at every place where we do well and faithfully.

We do well to worship our God, to praise God, and to fill our time and our lives with God's purpose.

And so we come again into God's presence, knowing that God's Spirit will fill our spirits, and nourish our souls. Amen.

*HYMN — To be selected by congregation

INVOCATION

God of the minute and the miraculous, you come to us again at this time in the gift of birth. You who became human flesh – you who cause grain and grape to grow – you who renew life and faith in your servants: astound us by the ordinary, dazzle us with what is unassuming, and transform us by what is mundane and everyday – a baby born to loving parents, completely inverting the world's order and expectation. Be with us now in the spirit of this same Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Psalm 150

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

ANTHEM *Jesus Born on This Day* M. Carey

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Colossians 3.12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body . And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

CAROL SING

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* (Tempus Adest Floridum) arr J.W. Kerr

*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

SILENT PRAYER FOLLOWED BY LORD'S PRAYER *("trespasses")*

POEM *Who Would Think That What Was Needed* John Bell, Graham Maule, 1990

*HYMN To be selected by congregation

*BENEDICTION

LOOKING AHEAD

December 31	No Soup Kitchen		January 4	6:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Scouts – Bear Den **Choir Rehearsal**
January 1			January 5	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours – Simon's Marketplace**
January 2	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts L&T	January 7	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Deacon's Mtg** Soup Kitchen
January 3	9:00 am	Backpack program			

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.** Poinsettias on the altar for **those we remember, things we celebrate, and of prayers for peace & world health.** Coffee hour is being hosted by **Jennifer Gill and Diane Lindsay**.

The Remembrance Tree is in the narthex. Please add the name of a loved one to the tree that we will include in prayer during worship on **January 7th**.

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.