THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
March 26, 10:00 a.m.
Fifth Sunday in Lent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Barbara-Jan Wilson, Deacon

PRELUDE — *In the Cross of Christ I Glory* — S. Keeney

INTROIT — *Gathering Hymn* — (Taize)

CALL TO WORSHIP

The God of heaven has made a home on earth,
Christ dwells among us and is one with us.
Come, all who thirst,
And drink the water of life.
Come all who hunger
And be fed with good things.
Come all who are weary and burdened,
Christ welcomes and brings new life to all.
Let us worship God.

*HYMN — *The Sun Is on the Sea and Shore* — 261

The sun is on the sea and shore, a new day has begun; with morning hymns we will adore the blessed Three-in-One; and we shall praise you ever more until the day is done.

Your love is ever in our view, like shining stars by night; your gifts are every morning new, O God of love and light; your mercy, like the heaven's blue, fill all our dazzled sight.

We do not know what grief and care each coming day may bring; the heart shall find some gladness there, trust you in ev'rything; the life that serves you ev'rywhere will never cease to sing.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, your mercy is everlasting and your love surpasses our understanding. We confess that we have been uncertain and faithless servants. We have set our hearts on our own comforts and have ignored the burdens that others carry. We have seen our sisters and brothers hungry or hurt or poor. (silent prayer of confession) Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON John 11.1-45 Pew Bible Page 980

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him, The disciples said to him, "Lord if he has fallen asleep, he will be alright." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly. "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at this feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See howe he loved him?" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man said to him, "Lord, already there is

a stench because he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to here, "Did I not tell you that if believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus look upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him."

ANTHEM *Father Forgive Them* P. Choplin

Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

SERMON Rev. Toni Smith

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Christ We Do All Adore Thee* T. Dubois

Christ, we do all adore Thee, and we do praise Thee forever,
For on the Hoy Cross hast Thou the world from sin redeemed.

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

POEM *Psalm 23: A Meditation* Steve Garnaas-Holmes

*HYMN *O For A World* 500

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways, where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved, where truth is spoken, children spared, and equality achieved.

We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice that opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise. Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace, where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *The Blessing of Aaron* N. Ramsey

LOOKING AHEAD

March 26	5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen	March 30	10:00 am	Back Pack Program
				7:00 pm	**Choir Rehearsal**
March 27	5:30 pm	Irish Dance Group			
			March 31	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours – Simon's Marketplace**
March 28	6:30 pm	Scouts – Arrows of Light	April 2	**10:00 am**	**Worship (Palm Sunday)**
				5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen
March 29	6:00 pm	Scouts – Bear Den			

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 church Rummage and Bake Sale returns on Saturday, April 29th. Volunteers are needed to bake items, setting-up before the sale and for working the day of the sale. Sign-up sheets are posted in the narthex and fellowship hall.

Capella Cantorum is holding a one-day voice lesson class in Old Saybrook on June 17th. See Claudia Epright for more details.

Offering envelopes have arrived. Please contact Diane Lindsay to receive or request a box.

The deacon for the month of March is **Barbara-Jan Wilson.** The greeter this morning is **Terry Schrieber**. Flowers for the altar were provided from **Terry Schrieber** to celebrate the joy of Spring. Coffee hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay.**

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

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

Easter Schedule 2023

April 2 Palm Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am

April 6 Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm

April 7 Good Friday 12:00 pm

April 9 Sunrise Service 6:15 am
Meet at Veteran's Rock in Fountain Hill Cemetery located on High Street in Deep River.

Easter Worship Service 10:00 am