THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
March 3, 2024 10:00 a.m.
Third Sunday in Lent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Cheryl Archer, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Holy, Holy, Holy* — R. Lau

INTROIT — *When Jesus Wept* — R. Young

CALL TO WORSHIP — from Psalm 19

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.
The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.
More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold.
Sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

*HYMN — *Come, Thou Font, Of Every Blessing* — 407

Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I pause along my journey; by thy help thus far I've come; and I hope, by thy great mercy, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; came to rescue me from danger, gave his body, shed his blood.

O to grace how great a debtor daily I am called to be! Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not

loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

HEBREW BIBLE Exodus 20.1-17

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

ANTHEM *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* G. Martin

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON John 2.13-22 (p. 969)

SERMON *"Sabbath Keeping"* Rev. Eileen Sypher

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Table of Mercy, Table of Rest* M. McDonald

*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")*

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

POEM "*A Sabbath Poem*" Wendell Berry

*HYMN *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* 87

The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth, and where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet, love he sought me, and on his shoulder gently laid, and home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me; thy rod and staff my comfort still, thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight, thy blessed grace bestoweth, and O what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days thy goodness faileth never; Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *God Be With You* R. Young

LOOKING AHEAD

March 3	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Deacon's Mtg.** Soup Kitchen	March 7	6:30 pm **7:00 pm** 7:00 pm	Scouts – Bear Den **Choir Rehearsal** Chester Garden Club Board Meeting
March 4	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	March 8	**8:15 am**	**No Coffice Hours**
March 5	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts – AOL	March 10	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** 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 March is **Cheryl Archer.** The greeter this morning is **Laurel Archer.** Flowers on the altar were provided by **Barbara-Jan Wilson** in anticipation of the arrival of a new granddaughter. Coffee Hour is being hosted by **Michele Procko**.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Alan is on sabbatical. Please contact Eileen Sypher for pastoral care. Eileen can be contacted via phone 860 391-1860 (cell) or esypher@ comcast.net (email).

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