THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
April 21, 2024 10:00 a.m.
Fourth Sunday of Easter

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Pat Holloway, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Prelude No. 1* — J. S. Bach

INTROIT — *Come and Fill Our Hearts* — Taize

CALL TO WORSHIP

Thanks be to God who has called us into service and enlisted us in this expedition of faith.

By the mercy of God we are engaged in this journey.

May we remember that we are partners together in the company of Christ.

We don't always know what we may encounter; the mysteries of God are many, and the will of God is sometimes hard to know.

Yet we know the Spirit will be our guide, and that nothing can thwart the mission of the church of Jesus Christ.

The way is before us; it is enough to know that we travel with a perfect guide who has already guaranteed our destination. Amen.

*HYMN — *Called As Partners in Christ's Service* — 353

Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace, we respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace. May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend, equal partners in our caring to fulfill God's chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring, Christ's clear call to work and worth, let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth. Men and women, richer, poorer, all God's people, young and old, blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission, in a small or global sense, help us bear each other's burdens, breaking down each wall or fence. Words of comfort, words of vision,

words of challenge, said with care, bring new pow'r and strength for action, make us partners, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life that surrounds each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife. Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase, messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.

INVOCATION

God of liberation and love, you have created us in your image; you have given us your vision of love, peace and dignity for all. Yet so many of your children have suffered persecution, poverty and violence; today we remember and pray for the refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. We know you have called us to be your hands and feet in the world, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked and to set the captives free. Lord, hear our prayer for peace, for justice and for liberation; hear our prayer for the coming of your realm; be with us, empower us, guide and sustain us in our mission to welcome and love every neighbor; Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Joshua 24.14-18

Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve God in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.' Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. God protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for the Lord is our God.'

ANTHEM *Thee We Adore*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON I Corinthians 9.19-23 (p. 1046)

SERMON *"The Missionary Impulse"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Choose this day whom you will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24.15)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* Mendelssohn
Cheryl Archer, Pat Holloway, Jennifer Gill, Ruth Mowrey, Susan Bird, vocalists

*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 *Missionaries* E.F. Hayward (1866-1927)

*HYMN *In the Midst of New Dimensions* 363

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways, who will lead the pilgrim peoples wand'ring in their sep'rate ways?
Refrain: God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, we your people, ours the journey now and over, now and ever, now and evermore.

Through the flood of starving peoples, warring factions and despair, who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?
Refrain

Though we reach the highest heavens, holding worlds at our command, we are yet a desert people searching for the promised land.
Refrain

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, may your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again.
Refrain

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *My Peace I Leave You* Taize

* - those who are able may stand

LOOKING AHEAD

April 21	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen	April 25	8:30 am 5:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Yoga Scouts – Wolf Den **Choir Rehearsal**
April 22	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	April 26	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
April 23	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts – L&T	April 28	**10:00 am** 3:00 pm 5:00 pm	**Worship** Essex Piano Trio Soup Kitchen
April 24	6:30 pm	Scouts - Webelos			

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 April is **Pat Holloway.** The greeters this morning are John and Daphne Stitt**.** Flowers on the altar were provided by **John** and **Daphne Stitt.**

Essex Piano Trio – April 28th
Please join us here at United Church of Chester for the return of the Essex Piano Trio on Sunday, April 28th at 3:00 pm.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday – Friday 8:30 am – 12:30 pm, other times by appointment

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