THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
April 28, 2024 10:00 a.m.
Fifth Sunday of Easter

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Pat Holloway, Deacon

PRELUDE — *I Believe* — Drake, Graham, Shirl & Stillman

INTROIT — *Come and Fill Our Hearts* — Taize

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches."
When we live in Christ, and Christ in us, we will bear much fruit.
Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants; now I call you my friends."
When we are Jesus' friends, we live in friendship with all humanity.
Jesus said, "Love one another."
We sing God's praise by our love and friendship toward the whole human family. Amen.

*HYMN — *Now the Green Blade Riseth* — 208

Now he green blade riseth from the buried grain, wheat that in dark earth many days has lain; love lives again, that the dead has been;
Refrain: Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain, thinking that never he would wake again, laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
Refrain

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain, he that for three days in the grave had lain, quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen.
Refrain

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain, thy touch can call us back to life again, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
Refrain

INVOCATION

Almighty God, from whom all blessings flow, our hearts overflow this morning with abundant gratitude. We bless you for the signs of life all around us: for lengthened days, green grass, budding flowers, and all the scents and colors that make your creation real for us. We thank you for the flow of ideas, the sharing of convictions, for our ability to receive and infuse hope, and the play of divine truth upon the human spirit. We reserve for you our highest praise, for your mercy is the same from age to age, and your life-giving grace infuses our spirits and all creation forever; Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 5.1-10

ANTHEM *Praise His Holy Name* K. Hampton

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON John 15.1-8

Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, and God is the vine-grower, who removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit is pruned to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. The Lord our God is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

SERMON *"Listen to Your Garden Grow"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."
(John 15.5)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *I Need Thee Every Hour* R. Lowrey

*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 *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

*HYMN *In the Bulb There is a Flower* 493

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody; there's a dawn in every darkness; bringing hope to you and me. From the past will come the future; what it holds a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity; in our doubt there is believing; in our life eternity. In our death, a resurrection; at the last a victory, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *My Peace I Leave You* Taize

* - those who are able may stand

LOOKING AHEAD

April 28	**10:00 am** 3:00 pm 5:00 pm	**Worship** Essex Piano Trio Soup Kitchen	May 2	8:30 am 5:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Yoga Scouts – Bear Den **Choir Rehearsal**
April 29	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	May 3	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
April 30	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts – AOL	May 5	**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 April is **Pat Holloway.** The greeter this morning is Stephen Roach**.** Flowers on the altar were provided by **Deb Calamari.** Coffee hour is being hosted by the **Eprights** and **Holloways**.

Essex Piano Trio – April 28th
Please join us here at United Church of Chester for the return of the Essex Piano Trio this afternoon 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.

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