THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
April 30, 2023 10:00 a.m.
Fourth Sunday of Easter

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Diane Lindsay, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Prelude in C* — J.S. Bach

INTROIT — *From All That Dwell* — G. Young

CALL TO WORSHIP
Beloved children of God, rejoice and be glad, for a new morning has dawned.
A new day has been born, and we are newly alive to enjoy it.
We know the beauty of God's creation and the wonder of the human family.
We remember those whose love has shaped our lives and whose presence has overcome our loneliness.
We gather in our church to worship God, to share prayers and gifts, and to pledge ourselves to God's work in the world.
May God bless us in this hour, so that what we do here may be honest, sacred, and filled with hope. Amen

*HYMN — *Once to Every Heart and Nation* — 530

Once to every heart and nation comes the moment to decide, in the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side; some great cause, God's new messiah, offering each bloom or blight, and the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

By the light of burning martyrs, Jesus' bleeding feet I track, toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back; new occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth; they must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.

Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong, truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future, and beyond the shadow's pow'r stands the One who hold us safely, keeping watch through darkest hour.

INVOCATION
Loving God, in you every family on earth receives its name. Illumine the homes of this earth with the light of your love, granting courage to those who are hurt or lonely,

endurance to those who care for unwell family members, and wisdom to those in fearful times of change. We thank you for the gifts of love we have received from mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, partners and companions, children and grandchildren. As we have been loved by you and by others, so may we also love. And may that redemptive love grant us your peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Genesis 12.1-4

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

ANTHEM *Speak, O Lord* Townsend and Getty

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You to receive the food of Your holy word. Take your truth plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in Your likeness. That the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith. Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience, Holy reverence, true humility; Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of Your purity. Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority. Words of power that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds; help us grasp the heights of Your plan for us. Truths unchanged from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity. And by grace we'll stand on Your promises and by faith we'll walk as You walk with us. Speak O Lord till Your church is built and the earth is filled with Your glory.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON I Peter 2.13-3.9

SERMON *"Blessed Rage for Order"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another,
a tender heart, and a humble mind."
(I Peter 3.8)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* V. Thompson

My Shepherd will supply my need, Jehovah is his name. In pastures fresh he makes me feed beside the living stream. He brings my wandering spirit back when I forsake his ways. He leads me for his mercy's sake in paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death thy presence is my stay. One word from thy supporting breath drives all my fears away. Thy hand, in sight of all my foes, doth still my table spread. My cup with blessings overflows, thine oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days. O may thy house be my abode and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest while others go and come. No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.

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 *The Idea of Order at Key West* Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

*HYMN *God Made From One Blood* 391

God made from one blood all the families of earth, the circles of nurture that raise us from birth, companions who join us to work through each stage of childhood and youth and adulthood and age.

We turn to you, God with our thanks and our tears for all of the families we've known through the years, the intimate networks on whom we depend of parents and partners and children and friends.

We learn through our families how closeness and trust increase when our actions are loving and just. Yet families have also distorted their roles, mistreating their members and bruising their souls.

Now give to each family in conflict and storm a sense of your wisdom and grace that transform sharp anger to insight which strengthens the heart and makes clear the place where rebuilding can start.

Then widen the wisdom and grace to include the races and viewpoints our families exclude till peace in each home bears and nurtures the bud of peace shared by all you have made from one blood.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Trees of the Field* S. Dauermann

LOOKING AHEAD

April 30	5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen	May 4	10:00 am	Back Pack Program
				7:00 pm	**Choir Rehearsal**
May 1	5:30 pm	Irish Dance Group	May 5	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
May 2	6:30 pm	Scouts – Webelos	May 7	**10:00 am**	**Worship**
				5:00 pm	Soup Kitchen
May 3	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 deacon for the month of April is **Diane Lindsay.** The greeter this morning is **Debbie Froggatt**. Flowers for the altar were provided by **The Froggatts** in memory of Ruth Alice Froggatt. Coffee Hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay**.

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

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

Are you interested in learning more about, or considering membership at the United Church of Chester? Alan and some of our Deacons will be hosting an after-church conversation about membership later this Spring. If you'd like to be part of the conversation, please speak to Alan after the service, or call or email the church office.