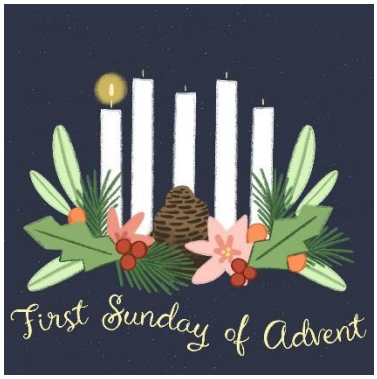

Reverend W. Alan Froggatt, Minister
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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 1, 10:00 a.m.
First Sunday of Advent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME		Claudia Epright, Deacon
PRELUDE	*Advent Partita on "Stuttgart"*	arr. C. Penfield
INTROIT	*Northfield*	J. Ingalls
LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH		Claudia and Ed Epright

Isaiah 2.2-4

Reader: Today is the first Sunday in the season of Advent, the Sunday of Hope. As we light this candle, we pray that we may become a people of Empowering Hope, hope in our lives, hope in our nation, hope in the world.

Lighting the Candle of Hope

Let us pray together:
Holy God, with Christmas yet weeks away, we pray that our hope will endure throughout the season, and that we may find hope's fulfillment in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ye watchers and ye holy ones, bright seraphs, cherubim and thrones, raise the glad strain, Alleluia! Cry out, dominions princedoms powers, virtues, archangels, angels' choirs, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim, lead their praises, Alleluia! Thou bearer of the eternal Word, most gracious, magnify the Lord, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Respond, ye souls in endless rest, ye patriarchs and prophets blest, Alleluia, Alleluia! Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong, all saints triumphant, raise the song, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O friends, in gladness let us sing, supernal anthem echoing, Alleluia, Alleluia! To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Refiner of finest intentions, purifier of the human heart, in Advent, we wait for you. More than this, we are impatient with you. Insecure with the world and anxious for ourselves, we often wonder when you are going to act according to our plans. We have yet to consider that, come Advent, it is You who are waiting for us: waiting for some act of genuine contrition; waiting for us to quiet down and listen; waiting for us to respond with a burning passion for your truth, your justice, your mercy. Equip us with humble hearts and willing spirits to receive you as you come to us through all the experiences of human life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 40.1-5

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

ANTHEM *Keep Your Lamps!* A. Thomas

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Luke 21.25-36 (p 962)

SERMON *"Discomfort Zone"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

(Getting a Handel on Advent – I)

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'

(Luke 21.25-26)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *A Christmas Plainsong* H. Kihlken

*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 *'Hope' is the thing with feathers* (314) Emily Dickenson (1830 – 1886)

*HYMN *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People* 115

Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God; comfort those who sit in darkness mourning 'neath their sorrows' load. Speak ye to Jerusalem of

the peace that waits for them; tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice of one that crieth in the desert far and near, bidding all to true repentance since the reign of God is here. Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away; let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Make ye straight what long is crooked, make the rougher places plain; let your hearts be true and humble, as befits this holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now o'er the earth is shed abroad; and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *The Peace of God* J. Rutter

LOOKING AHEAD

December 1	**10:00 am**	**Worship** No Soup Kitchen	December 5	8:30 am	Yoga
December 3	8:30 am 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	Yoga Scouts Chester Garden Club Exec. Mtg.	December 6	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
December 4	2:45 pm 6:30 pm	After-school program Scouts	December 7	**9:00 am – 1:30 pm**	**Christmas Fair**
			December 8	**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 December is **Claudia Epright.** You were greeted this morning by **Deb Calamari.** Chancel Flowers were provided by **Rob Miceli** in honor of what would have been his mother **Shirley Miceli's** 100th birthday. **Claudia Epright** and **Jennifer Gill** are hosting coffee hour.

Christmas Fair is this Saturday, December 6th!

Advent Devotionals are available in the narthex. One per family please.

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

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