Reverend W. Alan Froggatt, Minister
Karli Gilbertson, Music Director and Organist
Post Office Box 383, Chester, Connecticut 06412 860-526-2697
E-mail: unitedchester@uccchester.org web site: www.uccchester.o

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 15, 10:00 a.m.
Third Sunday of Advent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Claudia Epright, Deacon

PRELUDE

INTROIT — *Northfield* — J. Ingalls

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH — Barbara-Jan Wilson, Sarah Napier and Nick Mainello
Luke 1.46b-55

Reader: Today is the third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Joy. As we light this candle we pray that we become a people of Contagious Joy, that our good words and good works might bring smiles to the lips and souls of all your children, in particular those struggling to find their own joy in this holy season.

Lighting the Candle of Joy - *(Light three candles: purple, purple and pink.)*

Let us pray together:
O God, who breathed into the first man and woman and gave the gift of life, may our lives reflect the joy that is knowing you, the joy that is animated in love and faithfulness and spreads like wildfire, lighting and enlightening your world. Amen.

*HYMN *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* 114

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.

Refrain

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Refrain

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (The Rev. Barbara E. Davis, New York, NY)

Eternal God, when we find ourselves despairing the state of the world and disappointed and fearful of violence and suffering, draw near to us. Surround us, and all who suffer, with your love. We know that your presence does not mend immediate needs, that our prayers for peace may sound too simple, yet we say both over and over. We believe that you respond in ways we do not see. We believe that in saying the words, we speak of a future worth imagining. Send peace to this world God. Draw near to us and all who are suffering. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 9.2-7, KJV

ANTHEM *The Annunciation* T. Fettle

Ling-Fei Kang, oboist

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Matthew 4.12-17

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.' From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

SERMON *"The Crèche Conundrum"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

(Getting a Handel on Advent – III)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

(Isaiah 9.6 KJV)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *O Magnum Mysterium* M. Lauridsen

Pat Halloway, soloist

*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 *Dreams* Nikki Giovanni (1943-2024)

*HYMN *Of Eternal Love Begotten* 129

Of eternal love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, Christ is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heaven sing praises; angel hosts sweet anthems sing! And on earth let all the faithful now their joyous carols ring, ev'ry tongue Christ's name confessing, countless voices answering, evermore and evermore!

Christ, to thee with God Creator, and O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be: honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore!

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *God Be With You* R. Vaughan Williams

LOOKING AHEAD

December 15	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen	December 19	8:30 am	Yoga
December 16	5:30 pm	Irish Dance Group	December 20	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
December 17	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts	December 22	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen
December 18	6:30 pm	Scouts			

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 **Barbara-Jan Wilson**, **Sarah Napier** and **Nick Mainello.** Flowers for the chancel were given by **Tim** and **Barbara-Jan** in honor of the baptism of their three granddaughters: Sophia Ann, Avery Mae and Hadley Warren on December 22nd during the Christmas Cantata.. **Elaine Guadette** is hosting coffee hour.

Christmas Poinsettias
Last call to order Christmas Poinsettias or to include a dedication in the Christmas Poinsettias insert. Order forms are available in the narthex. Please complete and place in the offering plate or in the church office mailbox. Thank you.

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

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

Welcome Ling-Fei Kang

A native of Taiwan, oboist Ling-Fei Kang has performed as chamber musician and soloist nationally and internationally, including recitals with Oboe Duo Agosto at the conferences of the Asian Double Reed Association in Bangkok, Thailand, and the International Double Reed Society in Redlands, California and Tokyo, Japan. She served as Professor of Oboe at the Festival Eleazar de Carvalho in Fortaleza, Brazil and taught a masterclass at University of Southern Mississippi, University of South Alabama, Georgia State University and University of Alabama. She is also an experienced educator and teaches oboe at The Loomis Chaffee School, Miss Porter School, Renbrook School and Simsbury High School in Connecticut. Ms. Kang graduated with the Prix avec grande distinction from the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and also earned an Artist Diploma from The Hartt School, University of Hartford. Her principal teachers include Humbert Lucarelli and Bernard Jean.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akWDuLImCw0