THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 8, 10:00 a.m.
Second Sunday of Advent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME		Claudia Epright, Deacon
PRELUDE	*But Who May Abide the Day of His Coming?*	G.F. Handel
INTROIT	*Northfield*	J. Ingalls
LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH		Jeff and Hilarie Moore

Isaiah 11.1-6

Reader: Today is the second Sunday in the season of Advent, the Sunday of Peace. As we light this candle, we pray that we may become a people of Infectious Peace, the peace that finds its way into our hearts and spreads like healing balm into every corner of God's creation.

Lighting the Candle of Peace - *(Light two purple candles.)*

Let us pray together:
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, touch our hearts and spirits this morning with the peace that Jesus brings. It is not a worldly peace we seek, but the kind of peace that transcends human contingency and transforms peoples and nations in the image of the divine. Amen.

*HYMN *People, Look East* 116

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today Love, the Guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there. Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look east and sing today Love, the Rose is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look east and sing today Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth. Set ev'ry peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look east and sing today Love, the Lord is on the way.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Brian Wren, 1936 -)

Mysterious and faithful God, we lay our lives before you. Come what may, we will live our lives before you: whether you speak or are silent, are present or absent, hidden or revealed. From ages past, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God beside you. So we follow you, and trust that you show your love to all who remain right and true, and who through our living embody your ways, through Christ, your Word revealed, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Malachi 3.1-4

Look: I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

ANTHEM *Advent Processional* D. Greig

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Luke 1.67-80

SERMON *"Next to Godliness"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

(Getting a Handel on Advent – II)

"The dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."
(Luke 1.78-79)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Away In A Manger* P. Sjolund

*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 *Peace* Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

*HYMN *Now Bless The God of Israel (Song of Zechariah)* 122

Now bless the God of Israel, who comes in love and power, who raises from the royal house deliverance in this hour. Through holy prophets God has sworn to free us from alarm, to save us from the heavy hand of all who wish us harm.

Remembering the covenant, God rescues us from fear, that we might serve in holiness and peace from year to year; and you, my child, shall go before to preach, to prophesy, that all may know the tender love, the grace of God most high.

In tender mercy, God will send the dayspring from on high, our rising sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh. God comes guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more. Sing praises to the Holy One! O worship and adore!

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

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

*All who are able may stand

LOOKING AHEAD

December 8	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen	December 12	8:30 am	Yoga
December 9	5:30 pm	Irish Dance Group	December 13	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at Simon's Marketplace**
December 10	8:30 am 6:30 pm	Yoga Scouts	December 14	9:00 am – 1:30 pm	Chester Library Book Sale
December 11	2:45 pm 6:30 pm	After-school program Scouts	December 15	**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 **Sue Germini-Humble** and **Anthony Humble.** Flowers for the chancel were provided by **Sue Germini-Humble** in celebration of the magic of the season. **Judy Schondorf** and **Brenda Johnson** are hosting coffee hour.

Christmas Fair – Thank you
Judy Schondorf and Brenda Johnson would like to thank all those who participated in this year's Christmas Fair. Whether you baked, made items, donated items, set-up, cleaned-up or shopped THANK YOU!!

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.