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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
March 9 2025, 10:00 a.m.
First Sunday in Lent

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME		Deb Calamari, Deacon
PRELUDE	*Elegy*	F. Ritter
INTROIT	*Come and Fill Our Hearts*	Taize

CALL TO WORSHIP

Lent is not a time for being miserable, but for taking stock and resetting our aims in following Christ.

Loving God, we trust in you; never let us fool ourselves.

Lent is an opportunity for healthy repentance: repentance for our indifference in face of the world's evil, repentance for personal sins which we have glossed over as mistakes in judgement.

According to your loving kindness, remember us, God of goodness and saving grace.

Lent is a time for joy; the exhilaration that comes from defying temptations, from turning our face to the light that shines on the narrow path of Christ Jesus, from walking into adverse winds and enjoying small daily victories.

Make us know your ways ,O God, teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation and true happiness. Amen.

*HYMN *We Yearn, O Christ, For Wholeness* 395

We yearn, O Christ, for wholeness and for your healing touch; too long have we felt helpless; our burdens seemed too much. Forgetting all pretenses we make our pleadings heard, in hope and expectation await your gracious word.

We long to have companions who travel by our side, strong friends to call and answer with whom we are allied; as we lift up each other when struggles lay us low, community will flourish; our faith and caring grow.

We need your living presence, O Christ of Galilee, a presence that revises us and sets our spirits free. No longer are we fearful, your love pervades each place. Empower us with courage to claim your healing grace.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, our soul, our strength, our mind; we have not loved our neighbors with a deep and abiding compassion. And since these are the fulness of the commandments, what then is left to say? Transform our shallowness, enliven our deadness, heal our wounded and broken places, and so fill us with your Spirit that we can be forgiven, even as we are trying to forgive ourselves, and others. Help us to see the consequences of our words and our actions and help us make the sacrifice required to love you with all our being, and our neighbors as ourselves, even more than ourselves. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, whose love for us knows no end; Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 58.3-9 (p. 674)

ANTHEM *On Eagle's Wings* M. Joncas & D. Wagner

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON I John 4.7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent the only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent

the Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

SERMON *Covenant to Care* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard."
(Isaiah 58.8)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Mercy* C. Courtney

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 Kindness of Others* Cathy Song (1955 -)

*HYMN *There is a Balm in Gilead* 400

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain. But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

Refrain

Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend, and if you look for knowledge he'll ne'er refuse to lend.

Refrain

If you can't preach like Peter, if you can't pray like Paul, just tell the love of Jesus, and say he died for all.

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *My Peace* Taize

LOOKING AHEAD

March 9	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Un-Birthday Party** **Trustees Mtg.** Soup Kitchen	March 13	8:30 am 6:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Yoga Scouts **Choir Rehearsal**
March 10	5:30 pm	Irish Dance	March 14	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours** **Simon's Marketplace**
March 11	8:30 am 6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Yoga Scouts Chester Garden Club	March 16	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** **11:15am**	**Worship** **Council Mtg** **Outreach Mtg**
March 12	2:30 pm	Treehouse Players After School Program.		11:30 am 5:00 pm	Irish Dancers 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 March is **Deb Germini Calamari.** Chancel Flowers provided by **Diane Lindsay** are in celebration of **David Lindsay's** birthday tomorrow; and **"Happy Birthday"** to everyone at our **"Un-birthday Party"** this morning. You are greeted this morning by **Diane Lindsay.** Coffee hour is being hosted by **The Un-Birthday Party**. Thank you to all who volunteer!

Lenten Devotionals
"Into the Deep" Lenten devotionals are available in the narthex. One per family please.

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

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