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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
May 18, 2025 10:00 a.m.
Fifth Sunday of Easter

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME		Claudia Epright, Deacon
PRELUDE	*Andante Maestoso*	A. Corelli
INTROIT	*Lord, We Ask You*	C. Kocher

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are gathered in the presence of God our Creator, who sets before us the ways of life and death.

We are gathered in the presence of Christ our Redeemer, who calls us to accept the cost of discipleship, that we may also know its joy.

We have gathered in the presence of our Strong Spirit, who sustains us in trial and rejoicing.

In our living and in our dying, we belong to God.

In the shadow of God's wings, we sing for joy.

Let us worship God. Amen.

*HYMN *Lord, You Gave the Great Commission* 355

Lord, you give the great commission: "Heal the sick and preach the word." Lest the church neglect its mission, and the gospel go unheard, help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity. With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you call us to your service: "In my name baptize and teach." That the world may trust your promise, life abundant meant for each, give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community. With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you make the common holy: "This my body, this my blood." Let us all, for earth's true glory, daily lift life heavenward, asking that the world around us share your children's liberty. With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you show us love's true measure: "Father, what they do, forgive." Yet we hoard as private treasure all that you so freely give. May your care and mercy lead us to a just society. With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

Lord, you bless with words assuring: "I am with you to the end." Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend and, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity. With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us for the work of ministry.

INVOCATION

Loving and merciful God, expand our hearts this morning, that we might both feel and express your love which is for all people. Help us to feel and to know that you truly love even the most estranged of our neighbors every bit as much as you love us. Help us to recognize that you sent Jesus to be your shepherd to every one of your children, indeed to all Creation. And help us to be true disciples through our ministry of caring and of witnessing on behalf of all our neighbors in need. We ask this to your greater glory, Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Deuteronomy 32.48-51, 34.1-8

ANTHEM *Majesty and Glory of Your Name* T. Fettke

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Matthew 28.16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

SERMON *Celebrating Katie Wilcox* Rev. Eileen Sypher
Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Crystal River* H. Sorenson

*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 *A Beach Dawn* Sunil Sharma

*HYMN *I Love to Tell the Story* 360

I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

Refrain I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story; 'tis pleasant to repeat what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet. I love to tell the story, for some have never heard the message of salvation from God's own holy word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest. And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Refrain

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *The Trees of the Field*

(* all who are able may stand)

LOOKING AHEAD

May 18	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Annual Meeting** Soup Kitchen	May 22	6:30 pm **7:00 pm**	Scouts **Choir Rehearsal**
May 19	6:30 pm	Irish Dance	May 23	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at The Villager**
May 20	8:30 am 6:00 pm	Yoga Scouts	May 24	**9:00 am**	**Tag Sale**
May 21	6:30 pm	Scouts	May 25	**10:00 am**	**Worship**

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 May is **Claudia Epright.** The red geranium is given by **Claudia Epright** to honor and thank her two daughters who gave her a Robot vacuum for Mother's Day, and joined Ed to take her out to dinner. The greeter this morning is **Doreen Schwab**. Coffee Hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay**.

Town-wide Tag Sale – May 24th
There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall for helping with the Town-wide Tag Sale. People are needed for set-up, working during the sale (9am – 1pm) and clean-up.

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 1:00 pm