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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
August 24, 2025 9:00 a.m.
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD

WELCOME — Pat Holloway, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Nocturne* — D Shostakovich
Sue Saltus, organist

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP (from TS Eliot's "Four Quartets," *Burnt Norton*)

Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future.
And time future contained in time past.
What might have been is an abstraction remaining a perpetual possibility.
What might have been and what has been point to one end, which is always present.
Time past and time future, what might have been and what has been,
Point to one end, which is always present: the stillpoint of the turning world.

*HYMN — *We Would Be Building* — 411

We would be building; temples still undone o'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift, waiting till love can raise the broken stone, and hearts creative bridge the human rift. We would be building, Architect Divine, reveal the shape of life in your design.

Teach us to build; upon the solid rock we set the dream that hardens into deed, ribbed with the steel, both time and change to mock, the unfailing purpose of our noblest creed. Teach us to build; O Maker lend us sight to see the towers gleaming in the light.

O keep us building, Savior; may our hands ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts, when to our ears there come divine commands and all the pride of sinful will departs. We build with you; O grant enduring worth until your promised realm shall come on earth.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Creative God, you make all things new in heaven and on earth. We come to you this new day with new desires and old fears, new decisions and old controversies, new dreams and old weaknesses. Because you are a God of hope, we know that you create all the possibilities of the future. Because you are a God of love, we know that you redeem all the mistakes of the past. Because you are the God of our faith, we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise, we come into your presence with gladness and a joyful noise, and we serve and bless you always; Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

GOSPEL LESSON Luke 15.11-31

ANTHEM *Be Thou My Vision* (arr) J. Rutter
Pat Holloway, soloist

SCRIPTURE LESSON Revelation 2.1-7

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of the One who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your toil and your endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them to be false. I also know that you are enduring and bearing up for the sake of my name and that you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember, then, from where you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

SERMON *"An Ecclesiastical Crystal Ball"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Salve Regina* G. Puccini

*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 Future – never spoke* (672) Emily Dickinson

*HYMN *Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling* 303

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me; patient and loving, he's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.

Refrain: Come home, come home, ye who are weary, come home; earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling calling, "O sinner come home!"

Why should we linger when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we wait, then, and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me?

Refrain

O for he wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me; though we have sinned he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me.

Refrain

*BLESSING & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Danish Amen*

(* all who are able may stand)

LOOKING AHEAD

August 24	**9:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen	August 28	8:30 am	Yoga
August 26	8:30 am	Yoga	August 29	**8:15 am**	**No Coffice Hours**
			August 31	**9:00 am** **10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Trustees Meeting** 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 August is **Pat Holloway.** You were greeted this morning by **Sue Germini-Humble.** Chancel Flowers were provided by **Sue Germini-Humble.** Coffee Hour is hosted by **Norma Stearns**.

Rally Day Picnic – September 7th
Our annual Rally Day picnic is scheduled for Sunday, September 7th following the worship service at 10:00 am. Please bring a dish to share, invite a friend and enjoy the day!

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 9am – 1:00 pm – closed the remainder of the week