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

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
December 28, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
First Sunday after Christmas

WELCOME — Daphne Stitt, Deacon

PRELUDE

INTROIT — *What Songs were Sung* — J. Niles
Pat & Rick Holloway

CALL TO WORSHIP

How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of One who brings good tidings.
We receive good tidings of joy, words of peace, a message of salvation.
Break forth into singing, for God has comforted the people, brought bloom in the wasteland, shown strength in all the nations.
Word of the infant born in Bethlehem is our good news.
Christ is born. The prophets' hopes are made flesh and all our longings are made human in joy.
Rejoice and be glad: Christ is born to the world, today and every day! Amen.

*HYMN — *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* — 137

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! The herald angels sing. "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the ever lasting Lord! Late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity, pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heavenborn Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Rightousness! Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings. Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die, born to raise all souls on earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God, in this heart of Christmastide, we come to you in the silence and solace of prayer. Our Christmas celebrations have taken on many shapes and contours; traditions old and new each bear their own meaning to us. And now, between the nativity and the new year, we pause: we breathe in the blessing of creation, we exhale the love of a savior. Help us learn how this is all connected, how we are connected to you, how the body of Jesus Christ continues to grow and mature into the faithful witnesses you call us to be. In the name of the one newly born again to the world, Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Psalm 98

ANTHEM *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* R. Pritchard

HYMN *O Little Town of Bethlehem* 151

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth! And praises sing to God the King, and peace to us on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Luke 1.46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

HYMN *Away In a Manger* 150

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, he little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

SERMON *"The Stories Behind the Songs"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."
(Luke 1.46)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Lullee, Lullay* *P. Niedmann*

*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 AND LORD'S PRAYER *("trespasses")*

POEM *Christmas Bells* Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807-1882)

*HYMN *Joy To the World! The Lord Is Come* 134

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; let earth her songs employ; let fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *What Songs were Sung* J. Niles

(* those who are able may stand)

LOOKING AHEAD

December 28	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Trustees Mtg.** Soup Kitchen	January 3	**8:15 am**	**No Coffice Hours**
December 30	8:30 am	Yoga	January 4	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen
January 1					

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 this week is **Daphne Stitt.** Poinsettias on the altar for **those we remember and celebrate.** You were greeted this morning by someone with a smiling face. Coffee hour is being hosted by **Diane Lindsay**.

Offering envelopes for 2026 are available in the Narthex. If you do not find your name on a box, please see Diane Lindsay, Financial Secretary.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Alan will be working remotely this week.

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