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# THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
January 25, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
*Third Sunday of Epiphany*

WELCOME — Pat Holloway, Deacon

PRELUDE — *Chant Heroique* — G. Blake

INTROIT — *Blessing* — P. Grainger

CALL TO WORSHIP
What our eyes have not seen,
**What our ears have not heard,**
What lies beyond the power of human imagination,
**This is where God can be found.**
God is wiser than mortal reason;
**God is stronger than our collective determination;**
God is both within and beyond all human striving;
**And God, this great and wonderful God, calls us by name into this holy worship. Amen.**

*HYMN — *Morning Has Broken* — 258

Morning has broken like the first morning, blackbird has spoken like the first bird. Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word.

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven, like the first dewfall on the first grass. Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning born of the one light Eden saw play! Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's recreation of the new day!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

**O Steadfast lover of humanity, we come to you as those who seek ways of loving more wisely, more genuinely, more steadfastly. We seek to live our lives in the love of Jesus, that we might be more passionate and patient, faithful and forgiving, in loving one another and this world of many peoples. Through your spirit, build our church into a living temple, a sure sign of your presence on earth, and in us. Amen.**

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Jeremiah 8.10b-13; Isaiah 34.4; Hosea 9.10

ANTHEM *Jubilate* J. Michel

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Mark 11.12-29

On the following day, when Jesus and the disciples came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it…The next morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

SERMON *"Figs: Sometimes a Sermon Writes Itself"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations
But you have made it a den of robbers."
(Mark 11.17)

## RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore* C. Gabarain

*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

*HYMN *Create in Me a Clean Heart* 397(tune: Dennis)

Create in me, O God, a heart that's clean and pure, a spirit new, made right with you, a mind that's clear and sure.

Restore to me the joy that once I did receive when faith was new, and love from you was easy to believe.

Your Spirit gran to me, that others I may seek, to share anew my love for you in all I do or speak.

Then open, Lord, my lips, to sing your endless praise; each day anew, I'll worship you, and love you all my days!

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Blessing* P. Grainger

(* those who are able may stand)

## LOOKING AHEAD

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| January 25 | **10:00 am**<br>5:00 pm | **Worship**<br>Soup Kitchen | January 29 | 8:30 am<br>6:30 pm<br><br>**7:00 pm**<br><br>7:00 pm | Yoga<br>Scouts – Pack Meeting<br>**Choir Rehearsal**<br>Democratic WIA lecture |
| January 26 | 5:30 pm | Irish Dance | January 30 | **8:15 am** | **Coffice Hours at The Villager** |
| January 27 | 8:30 am<br>**7:00 pm** | Yoga<br>**Choir Rehearsal** | February 1 | **10:00 am**<br>5:00 pm | **Worship**<br>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 January is **Pat Holloway.**

**Wish You Were Here – February 15th**
Submission forms for Wish You Were Here Remembrance Day which will be on February 15th, are available in the narthex or submission forms are available online. Please call Cheryl Archer or the church office if there are any questions.

**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:** Wednesday – Friday 8:30 am – 12:30 pm or by appointment

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