Reverend W. Alan Froggatt, Minister
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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHESTER

An Open & Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
March 22, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Fifth Sunday in Lent

WELCOME — Claudia Epright, Deacon

PRELUDE

INTROIT — *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* — H. Lemmel

CALL TO WORSHIP

When God restored the fortunes of the people, we were like those who dream.
Our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongues released shouts of joy.
Today our hearts overflow with gladness, not because all is right with the world -
But because God does not leave us alone.
We worship the God who intrudes in our lives, lifting up the downtrodden, filling the hungry with good things, setting the prisoner free.
God's light penetrates shadows of pain and fear, isolation and despair; it illuminates every corner of our lives. Amen.

*HYMN *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* 401

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved and set me free! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come; 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures; God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of all mercy, we confess before you and each other the times we have been unfaithful to you. When we lack love for our neighbors, waste opportunities to do good, and look the other way when you cry out to us in the suffering of our brothers and sisters in need. We are sincerely sorry for our sins, both those we commit deliberately and those that we allow to overtake us. We ask your forgiveness and pray for strength that we may follow in your way and love all your people with that perfect love which casts out all fear; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in this word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and great power to redeem. It is the Lord who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

ANTHEM *My Lighthouse* Rend Collective

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Luke 18.1-8 (p. 957)

SERMON *"Notes from the Abyss"* Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

"Because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice so that she may not wear me out by continually coming" (or, *"so that she may not finally come and slap me in the face."*) (Luke 18.5)

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERTORY *Kumbaya* P. Sjolund

*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 *A Song of Ascents* Marilyn Pagán Banks

*HYMN *In Deep Despair I Cry to You* 453

In deep despair I cry to you O hear my voice, my prayer. If you should mark iniquities, who would stand guiltless there? But God, with you forgiveness dwells and love beyond compare.

The soundless whisper of your voice, your hovering presence near, for these my longing spirit waits as for the morning clear, as those who watch throughout the night till morning shall appear.

Because your love is steadfast, God, on you our hope relies; you will redeem your faithful ones from all iniquities and turn to songs of thanks and praise our sorrow and our sighs.

*BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Go Now in Peace* D. Besig

(* those who are able may stand)

LOOKING AHEAD

March 22	**10:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** Soup Kitchen	March 26	8:30 am **7:00 pm**	Yoga **Choir Rehearsal**
March 23	5:30 pm	Irish Dance	March 27	**8:15 am**	**Coffice Hours at Simon's**
March 24	8:30 am	Yoga	March 29	**10:00 am** **11:00 am** 5:00 pm	**Worship** **Trustees' Mtg.** Soup Kitchen

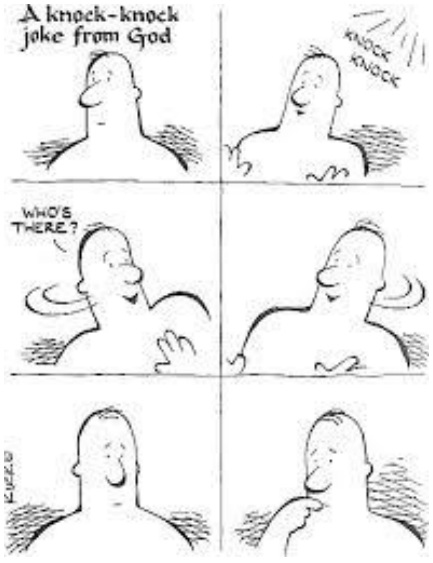
NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 **Claudia Epright.** Chancel flowers were provided by **Peggy Phillips** in celebration of SPRING! You were greeted this morning by **Peggy Phillips**. Coffee hour is being hosted by

Sermon Talk Back – Sunday, March 29th
Join Alan following worship service for Sermon Talk Back where we will look at the story of Palm Sunday.

Easter Flower Order Forms due Wednesday, April 1st
Flower order forms for Easter will be included in the bulletin for the next few weeks. Please complete the form and leave either in the offering plate or the church office. Thank you.



Rummage Sale – Saturday, April 18th
Our annual Rummage Sale is Saturday, April 18th and set-up will begin on Saturday, April 11th. Donations are being accepted now through Thursday, April 16th. Acceptable items; clothes, books, toys, games, housewares, home decorations, linens, etc. No large furniture, no children's car seats or furniture, no computer equipment. Any questions please contact Marie Ready or Judy Schondorf. Thank you.

ALAN'S OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday – Friday 8:30 am – 12:30 pm or by appointment

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