

The First Church of Christ in Hartford
founded 1632
a member of the United Church of Christ



**Embracing God's Presence,
Serving the City,
Building Upon Our Heritage**

Sunday, July 16, 2017

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HARTFORD
*An Open and Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ*

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome ~ Bienvenidos

July 16, 2017

10:00 AM

WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT CENTER CHURCH. We are glad you have joined us for this service of worship and the fellowship of this congregation. We hope that you will be both comforted and challenged by the Word of God for us today. If you are new to our community, we hope you will consider making this your church home. Any of our worship leaders or ushers will be able to help with your questions. If you are already a member, be sure to extend a friendly greeting to those around you, starting with someone you don't know...yet.

*Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices
before the service of Worship begins.*

*Childcare is available in the nursery (room A)
during the summer months.*

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

“Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.”

~ Francis of Assisi

TOLLING OF THE HOUR and GREETING

HIGHLIGHTING OUR MINISTRIES

COMING BEFORE GOD

PRELUDE

Great is Thy Faithfulness

W. Runyan
arr. Walters

PLEASE STAND.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come together to worship our God,

People: who created us and sustains us in love.

Leader: We come together to worship Jesus,

People: who showed us how to live and how to love.

Leader: We come to worship in the Spirit.

People: Through the communion of the Holy Spirit, we are given new life, that we may rejoice in God's goodness and live what we experience in this fellowship of love. Amen.

HYMN

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

No. 1
ST. DENIO

PLEASE BE SEATED.

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION and THE LORD'S PRAYER

This is the place and this is the time. God waits to break into our experience: to change our lives, to changes our minds, to change our ways, to make us see the world, and the whole of life, in a new light. This is the time and this is the place where God can plant in us seeds of hope for the future and our world. This is the place, as are all places; and this is the time, as are all times. Here and now, let us be present to God. Here and now, let us worship our God. We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray saying Our Father...

Our Father*, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead

us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

(* = traditional wording but you may use alternative wording, such as “God,” “Creator,” or “Mother,” as seems fitting.)

CONFESSION AND RESPONSE

CALL TO CONFESSION

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Mercy and Justice, you have shown us what is right: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. Forgive us as individuals and as a people when we fall short of what you require of us. Forgive us for poverty that exists in our land of plenty, for inequality in education and access to health care, and for violence against individuals who do not look like us or believe what we believe. Forgive us for not being open-minded enough, hopeful enough, or loving enough to create a just and welcoming world. Help us so that we may, as individuals, as a church, and as a nation, work to build the kingdom that you desire on earth.

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: God hears the confession of our hearts and our lips. Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven for the things we have done and those we have failed to do. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered for new life.

People: **Our God is a loving and forgiving God. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

PLEASE STAND.

Congregational Response

“Glory to God the Creator”

music: Ronald A. Nelson, 1986

text: *Gloria patri*, 3rd century, transl.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The love of God, the peace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Since in Christ we have been reconciled, let us share his peace with one another.

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

PLEASE BE SEATED.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!” ¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

SERMON Soil, Seeds, and Sowers

Lisa Eleck

RESPONDING IN FAITH

PLEASE STAND.

HYMN

In the Bulb, There is a Flower

No. 433

PROMISE

PLEASE BE SEATED.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES

(We encourage you to use offering envelopes when giving.)

Offertory Piano Solo

Shall We Gather at the River

R. Lowry

Arr. L. Goss

PLEASE STAND AS THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD.

Hymn of Presentation

OLD HUNDREDTH

text: Thomas Ken, 1674; alt.

music: Louis Bourgeois, 1551

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, you heav'nly host:

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, We make this offering in gratitude for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us. Accept this offering, our financial contribution, but also, the offering of our hearts and our lives. Bless all that we offer in ways that are beyond our imagination. Multiply our gifts. Guide our lives, that we might be seeds of justice and peace for all people. Amen.

GOING FORTH

PLEASE REMAIN STANDING.

HYMN

Take My Life, God, Let it Be

No. 448

VIENNA

BENEDICTION

*Please enjoy the postlude or exit quietly.
Go in peace!*

POSTLUDE

Fanfare

G.F. Handel, 1685-1759

PASTORAL CARE DURING THE SUMMER

If you are in need of emergency pastoral care over the summer months, please contact the Church Office during office hours at (860) 249-5631, or Deacon Patricia Anderson at (860) 371-8862.

*Our thanks to Deacon Sara Markham; Usher/Greeter Kay Davidson;
and Liturgist Kathryn Lewis.*

*Our thanks to Lisa Eleck for leading Worship this morning. Lisa is a graduate of
Yale University Divinity School and was an intern here during her last semester.
She is seeking a call as pastor to a church in Connecticut.*

*Our thanks to Robin Roy for coordinating refreshments
during the month of July.*

*Our thanks to Dectora Jeffers for making our Sunday Morning
Coffee Ministry possible today.*

*The flowers on display in the Meeting House today are given in loving memory of
Pasqualina & Charles Meli from granddaughter Julie Soucy Hurley and her family.*

Monique Young will be on vacation from July 20-25.

*After today's service, please stop by the Remembrance Area to sign a card for
Mark & Nilsa (Soto) Cierpikowski (congratulations on wedding.)*

This Week at Center Church

Today	-	10:00	Worship Service at the Meeting House; followed by refreshments
Wednesday	-	4:00	Investment Committee Meeting (off-site)

***Next Sunday, July 23 ~
Worship Leader: Reverend Michael Ader***

+ LET THERE BE LIGHT +

*The steeple of the Meeting House will be lighted this week
as a memorial and tribute:*

- July 19 In memory of Lewis Fox on the eve of his birthday by friends and members of Center Church
- July 20 In memory of my brother Thomas Hooker, by the late Joseph K. Hooker
- July 21 In loving memory of her oldest brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Chen Hunh Hi-Ong by the late Janet Wei-Kuang Chen;
In loving memory of my parents, James and Grace Cadger,
by the late Francina M. Cadger
- July 22 In memory of Mr. and Mrs. H. Perkins Cole by their daughter, Nancy, and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Repetto and family

2017 CHURCH MEMBER DIRECTORIES

...will be available for pick up from the deacons after Sunday Worship services starting Sunday, July 23. If you would like to "go green" and help preserve the environment, please contact Marie in the Church Office to have a copy emailed to you.



July 18 ~ Luciano Valles, Jr.

July 19 ~ Elena Sanderson



*Dear Center Church Congregation and Family,
Thank you for the warm welcome, cake and reception this
past Sunday. You made my first Sunday very special!
Thank you for making me feel at home!*

*~ Bob Gilbert,
Director of Music/Organist*

+ IN OUR PRAYERS +

*Kelly Anderson, Margo Anderson, Tina Bobbitt, Robinson Buck,
Frances Burton, Nilsa Cierpikowski, Steven Harvin, Jane Macomber,
Marjorie F. Paust, Joyce Peroza, Michael Plankey, Jeff Rathnam,
Sally St. Amant, Earl Sanderson, Angie Smith and family, Norman Stanley,
the City of Hartford, the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of
Christ, the First Church of Christ in Hartford, Camp Asto Wamah, the
State of Connecticut, and all victims of violence and natural disasters*

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING Congregation. "We include into full participation in the life of this church persons of any age, race, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and physical, emotional and mental capacity" (from the statement adopted October 23, 1994.) In recognition of the richness of backgrounds of our congregation, a **DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES** will find expression in our worship services. Center Church offers an **OPEN COMMUNION**. Adults and children from all religious backgrounds are invited to partake.

FREE PARKING is available during Sunday Worship Services at the Travelers Plaza Garage off Prospect Street (next to the Hartford Club.) The garage closes at 1:00pm (12:00pm June through August). Free on-street parking is also available on Gold Street and on the west side of Lewis Street each Sunday.

REST ROOMS are located in the basement of the Meeting House. Please use the stairs in the southeast corner of the building. For safety, please have an adult accompany your child to the restroom.

CHURCH SCHOOL is held at the Church House (60 Gold Street) for preschool to 12th Grade. Children are to remain with their families in the Meeting House during worship until they depart for Church School following the Children's Moment. Please pick your child up promptly at 12:00pm. For their safety, children will remain with their Church School instructor until an adult picks them up.

CHILDCARE and NURSERY care are provided by trained, capable, and nurturing staff and volunteers, and is available in the Meeting House basement for infants and toddlers (up to two years of age.) A nursery without staff is also located on the second floor of the Church House.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES are held in the Church House (60 Gold Street) at 8:45am. Announcements regarding Adult Education classes are announced in our publications.

HANDICAPPED ACCESS to the sanctuary is via the lift outside at the south end of the portico. If possible, please call the church office in advance for assistance in using the lift.

Please feel free to confer with a minister regarding our **INQUIRER'S CLASSES** for **POTENTIAL MEMBERS, BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS** or **COMMITMENT CEREMONIES**. The latest issue of **CENTER CHURCH NEWS** is available in the literature rack at the back of the Meeting House and at the Church House (60 Gold Street).

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A member of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

CENTER CHURCH, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, CT 06103

Church Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 4:00pm

Library Hours: Wednesdays, 9:30am to 11:30am, Sunday 9:45am to 10:45am, or by appointment.

P 860.249.5631 ★ F 860.246.3915

www.centerchurchhartford.org

We are currently seeking a Transitional Minister.

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean

Director of Music/Organist: Robert F. Gilbert (ext. 204)

Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries: Candice Dolberry (ext. 205)

Director of Faith Formation: Jana Russo-Priestley (ext. 210)

Youth Coordinator: Anne Russo-Priestley (ext. 210)

Church Administrator: Marie Ferrantino (ext. 209)

Bookkeeper: Charlotte Cardone (ext. 201)

Receptionist/Office Assistant: Monique Young (ext. 200)

Sexton: Thomas St. Amant

Assistant Sexton: Ileia Belton

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