

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

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome ~ Bienvenidos

August 19, 2018

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.*

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*"We must understand that the real theme, content and object of
this sacrament [marriage] is not 'family,' but love."*

~ Alexander Schmemmann

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

COMING BEFORE GOD

PLEASE BE SEATED.

PRELUDE

My Jesus, I Love Thee

Arr. B. Walters

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTERING PRAYER (sung)

**Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

PLEASE STAND.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Created by love, for love, we come to worship the source of all love.
Let us worship; let us sing!

OPENING HYMN

I Love to Tell the Story

No. 522

HANKEY

CONFESSION AND RESPONSE

PLEASE BE SEATED.

CALL TO CONFESSION

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

THE PASSING OF PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us bless each other with the peace of Christ.

PROCLAIMING GOD'S LIVING WORD

PLEASE BE SEATED.

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Song of Songs 8:6-7 (NRSV)

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:25-33 (NRSV)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

SERMON Allegories of Love

The Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse

RESPONDING IN FAITH

PLEASE STAND.

HYMN

When Love Is Found

No. 362

O WALY WALY

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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, forever. Amen.

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

PLEASE BE SEATED.

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES

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

Offertory Music

Lily of the Valley

Arr. Wendell Whalum

Dectora Jeffers, pianist

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

As you have given us gifts, loving God, so we offer our gifts. May we be gifts to you and to one another in love. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

GOING FORTH

PLEASE REMAIN STANDING.

CLOSING HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

No. 43

BEECHER

BENEDICTION

Please be seated to enjoy the postlude.

POSTLUDE

This Little Light of Mine

Arr. M. Hayes