As Center Church, we respond to God by nurturing faith, and building authentic connections and relationships.
Welcome ~ Bienvenidos

December 1, 2019 10:30 AM

WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT CENTER CHURCH. Thank you for being here today! 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 silence all cell phones and other electronic devices before the service of Worship begins.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

COMING BEFORE GOD

PLEASE BE SEATED.
ORGAN PRELUDE
Sleepers, Wake! A Voice is Calling! J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT
Of the Father's Love Begotten Medieval Plainsong
GATHERING WORDS

Leader: Mary was pregnant, not married, afraid of what would come. In the midst of that, she sought out support. In the strength of that love, she sang, “My spirit rejoices in God!” Where is your spirit today? We are here together. May our spirits rejoice!

PLEASE STAND.
PROCESSIONAL HYMN
We Hail You God's Anointed

PLEASE BE SEATED.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE:
Where do you find hope?

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

PLEASE BE SEATED.

SOLO
He Shall Feed His Flock
Hannah Maynard, soprano
Warburton Choral Scholar

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

Leader: The word “Bethlehem” means “house of bread.” As we look toward Christmas, let us remember that Mary and Joseph journeyed to the House of Bread, where the Bread of Life came into this world.

People: Our shoes are on our feet; our hearts are ready; our lamps are lit. We come to this table to find bread for the journey.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION PRAYER
SANCTUS

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER (“debts”)**

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.)

**THE SHARING OF ELEMENTS**

All are invited to partake in the sacrament. Please come forward via the center aisle and return to your seat via the side aisles. The elements of communion are taken by the process of intinction: Please take a piece of bread, dip it into the chalice, then eat it.
COMMUNION MUSIC  
Seasonal Selections  
Catherine Thompson Maclean, Flautist

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Bountiful God, we thank you for this food, and we pray for strength to serve you till the time when all are fed, on earth as in heaven. In Jesus’ name, we pray; Amen.

(After communion, the children will exit the Meeting House to attend church school.)

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED.  
INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

PSALTER READING
Psalm 86  
NRSV: Old Testament, pg. 532

GOSPEL READING  
Luke 1:26-49  
The Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse  
NRSV: New Testament, pg. 933

MEDITATION  Doubt and Faith  
The Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse

RESPONDING IN FAITH

PLEASE STAND.  
HYMN
Canticle of the Turning  
Glory to God Hymnal (100)

PLEASE BE SEATED.  
THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES
(We encourage you to use offering envelopes when giving.)

OFFERTORY MUSIC  
Let All Mortal Flesh  
Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Charity Clark, Mezzo-Soprano  
Stewart Battle, Baritone  
The Center Church Choir
My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout
Canticle of the Turning

Em

C

D

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a
4 Though the nations rage from age to age, we re-

Em

C

D

Em

God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the
work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your
member who holds us fast: God's mercy must de-

G

D

Em

C

Em

wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
liv'er us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.

G

D

Em

C

D

Em

You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the
This saving word that our forebears heard is the

Em

C

D

Em

weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every
promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be
PLEASE STAND AS THE OFFERING IS BROUGHT FORWARD.

Hymn of Presentation

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

ADESTE FIDELIS (ENGLISH MELODY)
PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

O Mighty One, you have done and are doing great things for and through us, and you are holy and amazing. Bless all we offer you – time, possessions, passions – that your grace and favor may be made known in all the world. In Jesus’ name; Amen.

GOING FORTH

*PLEASE REMAIN STANDING*.

HYMN

Lift Up Your Heads

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Emmanuel

*Please be seated for the postlude. Go in peace!*

POSTLUDE

Noel

Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)
OUR THANKS TO THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN TODAY’S SERVICE AND MINISTRIES

The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse, Worship Leader
Robert Gilbert, Director of Music
Andre Keitt, Worship Coordinator
Margaret Sieger, Usher
Michael Sieger, Reader
Jeffrey Thomas and Family, Coffee Ministry
Ann Theriault, Refreshments Coordinator

There is no flower memorial this morning.

After Worship, please stop by the Remembrance Area to sign a card for Richard Jacques (speedy recovery.)

Travelers Garage CLOSED Today

Due to construction, we do not have access to the Travelers Plaza Garage today.
We apologize for any inconvenience.

“Let There Be Light” Memorial

There is no steeple memorial this week.

If you would like to light up the steeple in honor or memory of a loved one, please contact the Church Office for details.
WORLD AIDS DAY, DECEMBER 1ST
Today we remember lives lost to AIDS and support those living with HIV.

West Indies/Caribbean Christmas Sunday, December 15 10:30 AM Service
The St. Luke’s Steel Band of New Haven combines with the Center Church Choir during the morning service.
This Week at Center Church

Today
- 9:00 Adult Education Class (Church House);
- 10:30 Worship Service and Church School;
followed by Advent Festival at the
Church House – all are welcome!
- 3:00 Sunday Community Meals

Tuesday
- 11:00 Staff Meeting

Wednesday
- 7:30 Choir Rehearsal

December 1 ~ Roberta Peroza
December 3 ~ Marilyn Watson
December 7 ~ Bruce Bidwell & Roberta Roy

Have you signed up for our new texting service? It’s easy!

Center Church closing due to weather, important reminders, or
cancellation/rescheduling of a church-wide event.

To enroll, text CENTER to (860) 300-3697.

You will receive an opt-in from “Center Text In Church” and an invitation to
fill out a brief form to complete your enrollment. (Message and data rates
may apply according to your data plan.) We hope that this will help us all
stay in closer contact with one another at Center Church!

Closings & Cancellations on WFSB-TV/Channel 3

We also list all church event/activities cancellations, closings, and
postponements on our local CBS affiliate, WFSB-TV (Channel 3.) We are
listed as “Center Church, Hartford.”
WELCOME TO CENTER CHURCH!
Would you like to learn more?
Have our pastor contact you?
Interested in volunteering?
Please fill out this form →
and drop it in the offering plate.
We look forward to speaking with you!

IN CASE OF FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCY
Exit swiftly by the nearest safe door - two exits are located near the pulpit, and three exits are located at the rear of the sanctuary.
Help people around you who may have children or mobility challenges.
Call 911. Don't assume someone else has already done so!
Move to the Church House, so we can be sure everyone is accounted for.

Prayer List
Sunday Adult Education Faith Formation Classes: Advent Series begins 12/1

First-floor parlor of the Church House: December 1, 8, 15, 22 at 9:00am

On December 1, we will start an **Advent Series** about the meaning of Christmas -- to us and to others. We will use (1) some pieces from Advent and Christmas: *Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen*, and (2) materials suggested by class participants.

So far, Joe Howard has suggested that we spend some time with Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* because he was inspired by one of the characters in that story. Also, Rev. Shelly is selecting a children’s book. Please send any suggestions you have for additional materials that we can use to Alvin Thompson.

The following is a piece from the Nouwen book:

**In the Midst of Our Dark World**

I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God’s saving power....Our temptation is to be distracted by them....When I have no eyes for the small signs of God’s presence--the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends—I will always remain tempted to despair.

The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross – he asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises.

In January, we will continue with the series *The 1619 Project* as we prepare for Martin Luther King Day. If you have any questions or suggestions, please see Alvin Thompson or Rev. Shelly.
SAVE THE DATES!

ADVENT FESTIVAL
TODAY! (following Worship)

FAMILY CHRISTMAS
WORSHIP SERVICE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 10:30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24,
5:00pm (Musical prelude begins at 4:40pm)

14TH ANNUAL GREATER HARTFORD HANDEL’S
MESSIAH COMMUNITY SING/CONCERT
(Christmas Portion)
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 4:00PM
Christmas Poinsettias

In Memory
Or
In Honor

If you would like to help decorate the Meeting House for our Christmas celebration by purchasing a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, please fill out this form and, along with your check, direct it to the Church Office. You may place your order in the offering plate, or mail it to the church by Friday, December 13th. Please see below for your choice of sizes, and also indicate whether you would like to take one home after our Christmas Eve Worship service, or have your order delivered to a homebound person.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Your Name: _____________________________________________

Your Phone #: ____________________________________________

Check one:  □ In memory of      or      □ in honor of:
______________________________
______________________________

How many & what size?   _________ Small ~ $12.00 each
   _________ Large ~ $20.00 each

Total amount enclosed:   $__________

I will (check one):  □ take my plant(s) home      or      □ donate to a homebound person.

Please return this order form, along with your check, to the church office.
Make your check payable to The First Church of Christ in Hartford and write “poinsettias” on the check memo.
Please contact the Church Office with any questions at (860) 249-5631.
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.

TEXT ALERTS To receive text alerts regarding church activities and cancellations, please text the word CENTER to (860) 300-3697. (Message and data rates may apply according to your data plan.)

FACEBOOK LIVE We livestream our worship services on Facebook each week, and your presence here constitutes your permission for your image to be shown. If you prefer not to be seen, speak with the minister or whoever is operating the phone up front to determine where a good seat might be to avoid the camera. Our viewership is growing and we are excited to welcome a congregation in cyberspace!

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 during Summer services). On-street parking is also available on Gold Street and on the west side of Lewis Street, and is FREE on Sundays.

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.

CURRENT SUNDAY ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES are held in the Church House (60 Gold Street) at Noon. 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).

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HARTFORD
A member of the United Church of Christ (UCC)
CENTER CHURCH, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, CT 06103
Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 4:00pm
Library Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00am to Noon, or by appointment.
P 860.249.5631  F 860.246.3915  www.centerchurchhartford.org
Transitional Minister: The Reverend Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse (ext. 202)
Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean
Director of Music/Organist: Robert F. Gilbert (ext. 204)
Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries: Logan Singerman (ext. 205)
Sunday School Administrator: Ileia Belton (ext. 210)
Church Administrator: Marie Ferrantino (ext. 209)
Bookkeeper: Brenda Russell (ext. 201)
Receptionist/Office Assistant: Monique Young (ext. 200)
Sextons: Thomas St. Amant and Ileia Belton
Nursery Care: Tina Franklin
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LARGE-PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE ~ PLEASE REQUEST FROM AN USHER.