As Center Church, we respond to God by nurturing faith, and building authentic connections and relationships.
December 8, 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.

COMING BEFORE GOD

Please be seated.

ORGAN PRELUDE

Noel

Henri Mulet (1878-1967)

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

Love Came Down at Christmas

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Center Church Section Leaders

Zhanna Alkhazova, Charity Clark, Mark Hale, Stewart Battle
GATHERING WORDS

Leader: Across continents and centuries, languages and faith traditions, people have cried out to God, “Come! O Come!” Today people cry here and everywhere. Come with your cries and your hopes and listen for God.

PLEASE STAND.
PROCESSIONAL HYMN
O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Veni Emmanuel
Please sing verses 1, 2, 6, & 7.

PLEASE BE SEATED.
THE LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE:
Where do you find peace?

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

PLEASE BE SEATED.
ANTHEM
Angel's Carol
John Rutter (b. 1945)
The Center Church Choir

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED.
CHILDREN’S MESSAGE
Andre Keitt
(Afterward, the children will exit the Meeting House to attend church school.)

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

PSALTER READING
Psalm 146
NRSV: Old Testament, pg. 570

GOSPEL READING
Luke 1:50-55
NRSV: New Testament, pg. 934

SERMON  Mary Talks Politics
The Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse
RESPONDING IN FAITH

PLEASE STAND.

HYMN
please see next pages →
Canticle of the Turning

Glory to God Hymnal (100)

Please sing verses 3 & 4.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.)

PLEASE BE SEATED.

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES

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

OFFERTORY MUSIC
Jesus Child

John Rutter (b. 1945)

The Center Church Choir
My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout
Canticle of the Turning

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the
   God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the
   wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
   You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my
   weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my

2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you
   depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
   Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to
   those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a
   justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
   The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the
   food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every

4. Though the nations rage from age to age, we re-
   liv er us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
   This saving word that our forebears heard is the
   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

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

No. 126

REGENT SQUARE

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Rejoice

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
Larry Roeming, Worship Coordinator
Andre Keitt, Children’s Message
Nilsa Cierpikowski, Usher
Adalina Valdes, Reader
Jamaly Rios and Family, Coffee Ministry
Nilsa Cierpikowski, Refreshments Coordinator

There is no flower memorial this morning.

After Worship, please stop by the Remembrance Area to sign cards for Jonathan Otte (45th birthday, 12/8) and Clara Buck (85th birthday, 12/12.)

“Let There Be Light” Memorial
December 8 ~ In loving memory of our dear friend, the late Kenneth R. Knox, M.D. by Joyce & Harold Buckingham

December 13 ~ In memory of parents, Rev. Adam and Michelina Tangarone, by their children

If you would like to light up the steeple in honor or memory of a loved one, please contact the Church Office for details.

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 the Advent Festival;  
- 3:00 Sunday Community Meals

Tuesday  
- 11:00 Staff Meeting

Wednesday  
- 7:30 Choir Rehearsal

Friday  
Poinsettia Ministry Deadline  
(please see form within this bulletin)

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.

center church
the first church of christ UCC
CELEBRATE THIS HOLY SEASON!
WEST INDIES/ CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS
St. Luke’s Steel Band joins the Center Church Choir!
At Worship on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 10:30pm

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.