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

February 16, 2020 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.

PRELUDE
Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT
Jesus – The Very Thought to Me
J. B. Dykes
GATHERING WORDS

Leader: Take a moment and think; what word describes what you are feeling right this instant? (silence) Now, shout that word out all together. Loving God, take us where we are right now and fill us with your Spirit in whatever way we need it. Come, Holy Spirit, come!

PLEASE STAND.
OPENING HYMN
Rejoice, You Pure in Heart

PLEASE BE SEATED.
CENTERING PRAYER

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

PLEASE BE SEATED.
SOLO
Deep River
Spiritual, Arr. H. T. Burleigh
Phillip Fisherman, Warburton Choral Scholar

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

CHILDREN’S TIME
(Afterward, the children exit to attend church school.)

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED.
INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

PSALTER READING
Psalm 42

Leader:

1 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?
My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, “Where is your God?”

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

Congregation:

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Leader:

My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I walk about mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?”

As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, “Where is your God?”

Congregation:

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

GOSPEL READING
Matthew 5:21-26

SERMON It’s Not Easy
The Rev. Rochelle A. Stackhouse

NRSV: New Testament, pg. 882
RESPONDING IN FAITH

PLEASE STAND.

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 REMAIN STANDING.

HYMN

The Church of Christ, in Every Age

WAREHAM

DEDICATION OF THE CENTER CHURCH SEARCH TEAM

PLEASE BE SEATED.

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES

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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Ride the Chariot

The Center Church Choir

Zhanna Alkhazova, soprano soloist

Spiritual, arr. W. H Smith

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.
PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We have received your gifts, bountiful God, and our cups overflow. Now we give of our resources and commit ourselves to you anew, body, soul and spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

GOING FORTH

PLEASE REMAIN STANDING.

HYMN
   No. 506
   What a Friend We Have in Jesus
   Erie

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION RESPONSE
   We Will Follow Jesus
   Traditional Zulu

   Please be seated for the postlude. Go in peace!

POSTLUDE
   Tuba Tune
   C.S. Lang

   Best wishes to our Soprano Soloist Zhanna Alkhazova as she leaves us today and prepares for the upcoming birth of her baby.

   The flags are on display today in observance of Presidents’ Day (February 17.)
**TODAY’S SERVICE & MINISTRIES PARTICIPANTS**

Worship Leader: Rev. Shelly Stackhouse  
Musician: Bob Gilbert  
Worship Coordinator: John Conley, Jr.  
Usher: Kay Davidson  
Reader: Paul Bobbitt  
Coffee Ministry: Led Baxter and John Border  
Refreshments Coordinator: Anita Hawkins

**FLOWER MEMORIAL & CARD RECIPIENTS**

There is no flower memorial today.  
Today’s card recipients are Van & Lucille Parker (61st anniversary, 2/21.)  
Please sign a card at the Remembrance Area after Worship.

**LET THERE BE LIGHT MEMORIALS**

February 18 ~ In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the wedding of Nancy and David Maclean on February 18, 1967 by Center Church friends  
February 20 ~ In loving memory of Robert Peroza by his family  
February 22 ~ In honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of the late Graydon & Grace Lockwood, by several friends, 1986

**BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**

February 18 ~ David & Nancy Maclean  
February 19 ~ Buell French  
February 20 ~ Jonas Otte  
February 21 ~ Van & Lucille Parker

**THIS WEEK AT CENTER CHURCH**

Today  
10:30 Worship Service and Church School;  
12:00 Adult Education Class & Faith Formation Meeting;  
3:00 Sunday Community Meals (Church House)  
Monday  
Presidents’ Day ~ *Church Office closed*  
Tuesday  
11:00 Staff Meeting  
Wednesday  
7:30 Choir Rehearsal

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

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 (corner of Gold & Lewis), so we can be sure everyone is accounted for.
Sunday Adult Education
Faith Formation Classes

First-Floor Parlor of the Church House:
February 16 and 23; & March 1 (after Worship.)

On September 15, we began discussing some of the issues being talked about in connection with The 1619 Project, which is a project of The New York Times that takes its name from the fact that, in August 1619, enslaved Africans were first bought to Virginia. You can read about it online.

We are now continuing our discussion of essays on topics such as economics, health care, urban renewal, and music. If you look at the Reading Guide for The 1619 Project Essays, you will see guiding questions for each essay.

Starting March 8 (After Worship)

INSPIRED

What I love about the Bible is the story isn’t over. There are still prophets in our midst. There are still dragons and beasts. It might not look like it, but the Resistance is winning.

RACHEL HELD EVANS

We will be discussing Inspired by Rachel Held Evans. One reviewer writes:

Rachel Held Evans has taken the stodgy, ancient bundle of work we call the Bible and makes it accessible without trampling its ancient origins or cultural contexts. In doing so, she subverts the strange, modern assumptions we too often bring to its pages. Inspired is both delightful and essential.

(Mike McHargue, co-founder of The Liturgists, host of Ask Science Mike, and author of Finding God in the Waves)

If you have any questions or suggestions, please see Alvin Thompson or Rev. Shelly.
“An Afternoon of Jazz”
with Renowned Jazz Trombonist
Steve Davis and Friends

Sunday, February 23, 4:30pm
(FREE EVENT ~ reception afterward.)

FREE PARKING just one block east at the Travelers Plaza Garage on Prospect Street (next to The Hartford Club.)

Center Church Meeting House, 675 Main Street,
Downtown Hartford (corner of Gold Street) p. 860.249.5631
www.centerchurchhartford.org
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)
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
Sunday Meals Program Coordinator: Carrie Howe
Nursery Care: Tina Franklin
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LARGE-PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE ~ PLEASE REQUEST FROM AN USHER.