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

March 1, 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.

Chiming of the Hour

Coming Before God

Please be seated.

Prelude

Prayer

L. Boellman

Choral Introit

These Forty Days

Welcome and Announcements
GATHERING WORDS

Leader: O Lord, just as we are we come - with mixed thoughts, jumbled feelings; not knowing what we want or expect.

People: We look at ourselves every day in the newspapers and on the television, a mixture of brokenness and a search for some joy, some peace, some wholeness.

All: In thee, great God, where twisted things are straightened and crippled lives are made whole, help us to change a thought, a feeling, a deed, that we might know the your redeeming joy and peace.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (UNISON)

Almighty God, who only can satisfy the souls which Thou hast created, gather our thoughts to thyself and guide us in the offering of our heart and mind, that whether we be taken up to the hill of clear and joyful vision, or into the dark valley where we must angel wrestle till the breaking of the day, we make no choice except to be with thee, and have no desire but to feel thy hand upon us in blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LENTEN CANDLE UN-LIGHTING:
A Journey into the Darkness of Maundy Thursday

Leader: Let us pause this first Sunday in Lent, and consider the times in our lives when we are tempted to turn away from God to get wealth or power or control over others. Let us ask forgiveness as we extinguish this first candle of Lent.

(silence)

PLEASE STAND.

OPENING HYMN
Jesus, Where’er Thy People Meet

Pilgrim Hymnal
Jesus, Where'er Thy People Meet

1 Jesus, wher'eer thy people meet, There they be-
2 For thou, with in no walls confined, In hab - it -
3 Great Shep - herd of thy chosen few, Thy form - er
4 Here may we prove the power of prayer To strength-en

hold thy mer - cy - seat; Wher - e'er they seek thee,
est the hum - ble mind: Such ev - er bring thee
mer - cies here re - new; Here to our wait - ing
faith and sweet - en care, To teach our faint de -

thou art found, And ev - ery place is hal - lowed ground.
where they come, And go - ing take thee to their home.
hearts pro - claim The sweet-ness of thy sav - ing name.
sires to rise, And bring all heaven be - fore our eyes. A - men.
PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)  

God of all, hear us now we pray...
All that we ought to have thought and have not thought,
All that we ought to have said, and have not said,
All that we ought to have done, and have not done,
All that we ought not to have thought and yet have thought,
All that we ought not to have spoken, and yet have spoken,
All that we ought not to have done and yet have done,
For thoughts, words and works, pray we, O God, for forgiveness.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Please be seated.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Peace Like a River
The Theriault Family - Dan, Ann, Tristan, and Isabella

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please remain seated.

INVITATION

RE-TELLING THE STORY

COMMUNION PRAYER

BREAKING OF BREAD

PARTAKING THE CUP

ORGAN MUSIC FOR COMMUNION
PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (UNISON)

In this bread and cup is the light blazing through the shadows of this world, in the pure love all around us. We become one with you this day, blessed God. Thank you. Glory to you this day and always. Amen.

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

PLEASE STAND.

HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Pilgrim Hymnal

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED.

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

HEBREWM SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

NRSV: Old Testament, pg. 2

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 4:1-11

NRSV: New Testament, pg. 881

MEDITATION Rags to Riches

The Rev. Paul D. Bobbitt

RESPONDING IN FAITH

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORDBS 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.)
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933

HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7.D.
Arr. from Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827

1 Joy-ful, joy-ful, we a-dore thee, God of glo-ry, Lord of love;
2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee, Earth and heaven re-flect thy rays,
3 Thou art giv-ing and for-giv-ing, Ev-er bless-ing, ev-er blest,
4 Mor-tals, join the hap-py cho-rus Which the morn-ing stars be-gan;

Hearts un-fold like flowers be-fore thee, Open-ing to the sun a-bove.
Stars and an-gels sing a-round thee, Cen-ter of un-bro-ken praise.
Well-spring of the joy of liv-ing, O-cean depth of hap-py rest!
Fa-ther love is reign-ing o' er us, Broth-er love binds man to man.

Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness, Drive the dark of doubt a-way;
Field and for-est, vale and moun-tain, Flow-ery mead-ow, flash-ing sea,
Thou our Fa-ther, Christ our Broth-er, All who live in love are thine;
Ev-er sing-ing, march we on-ward, Vic-tors in the midst of strife,

Giv-er of im-mor-tal glad-ness, Fill us with the light of day.
Chant-ing bird and flow-ing foun-tain, Call us to re-joice in thee.
Teach us how to love each oth-er, Lift us to the joy di-vine.
Joy-ful mu-sic leads us sun-ward In the tri-umph song of life. A-men.
PLEASE BE SEATED.
THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES
(We encourage you to use offering envelopes when giving.)

OFFERTORY MUSIC
All We, Like Sheep G.F. Handel
The Center Church Choir

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 (UNISON)
O Thou who nourishes and sustains the world from day to day, and who are
present more fully than we presume; for all gifts to us, we give our thanks.
Bless the fruits of our labour that those in need may be cared for in body
and spirit, in the name of our Lord. Amen.

GOING FORTH

PLEASE REMAIN STANDING.
HYMN O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee See next page → Pilgrim Hymnal

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION RESPONSE
Sevenfold Amen J. Stainer (1840-1901)
Please be seated for the postlude. Go in peace!

POSTLUDE Chorale L. Boellman
O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee

1 O Master, let me walk with thee In lowly
paths of service free; Tell me thy secret, help me bear The strain of toil, the fret of care.

2 Help me the slow of heart to move By some clear,
winning word of love; Teach me the wayward feet to stay, And guide them in the home-ward way.
strong, In trust that triumphs over wrong.

3 Teach me thy patience; still with thee In closer,
dearer company, In work that keeps faith sweet and give, With thee, O Master, let me live. Amen.
future's broadening way, In peace that only thou canst
TODAY’S SERVICE & MINISTRIES PARTICIPANTS
Worship Leader: Rev. Paul D. Bobbitt
Musician: Bob Gilbert
Worship Coordinator: Cheryl Thomas
Usher: Steven Lewis
Reader: Margaret Sieger
Coffee Ministry: Jeffrey Thomas & Family

FLOWER MEMORIAL & CARD RECIPIENT
The flowers on display today are given in celebration of the birthday of Alvin’s mother, Grizell T. Parsons, by Alvin and Lesley Morgan Thompson.

Today’s card recipients are Rev. J. Alan McLean (speedy recovery, back injury) and Connor James Thomas (20th birthday, 3/7.) Please stop by the Remembrance Area to sign.

LET THERE BE LIGHT MEMORIALS
March 4 ~ In memory of Clara G. Macomber by C. Sanford Macomber and the late Charles Macomber; In loving memory of Gladys Hernandez, born this day in 1923, whose “light” lit up this whole community, by Joyce & Harold Buckingham

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES
March 2 ~ Alvin Thompson   March 2 ~ Ruth Fortune
March 5 ~ Roderick Jones   March 7 ~ Connor James Thomas

THIS WEEK AT CENTER CHURCH
Today 10:30 Worship Service & Church School; followed by Refreshments; Adult Education Class; and Children’s Choir Rehearsal;
3:00 Sunday Community Meals (Church House);
Tuesday 11:00 Staff Meeting
Wednesday 7:30 Choir Rehearsal
Saturday Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, 2:00am: Turn your clocks AHEAD 1 hour tonight!

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 23 & March 1 (9:00 AM – note time change)

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)

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

Inspired is a love letter to scripture. Evans takes what has been weaponized against so many of us and she beats it into a ploughshare. She shows us how to love the Bible; how to see its flaws, beauty, strength, and spirit at the same time. That’s love. Not worship. Love. I’m so grateful for this expertly written, timely book.

~ Nadia Bolz-Weber, pastor and author of Pasrix and Accidental Saints).

If you have any questions or suggestions, please see Alvin Thompson or Rev. Shelly.
MINISTRY OF EASTER FLOWERS

Would you like to contribute to the Ministry of Easter Flowers in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a cherished friend or family member? Please complete the form below and send it with a check in the amount of $15.00 per plant. You may place your order in the offering plate, or mail it to the Church Office by Wednesday, April 8. Please indicate below whether you would like to take one home after our Easter Worship service, or have your order delivered to a homebound person.

EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

Your Name: ________________________________

Your Phone #: ______________________________

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

________________________________________________________________________

How many? ______________ @ $15.00 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 “Easter Flowers” on the check memo.

Questions? Call (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)
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.