



*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of The United Church of Christ*



**Order of Worship for
March 17, 2024, 10:30am**

**Welcome to Worship at Center Church!
We are delighted that you are with us today.**

WANDERING HEART: "TEACH ME"

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Two Lenten Hymns*

Handbell Solo

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Why are you here?

**All: I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.**

I see it! You're in the right place!

This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Why are *you* here?

I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.

**We see that in you! You're in the right place.
This is God's house. The door is open to you.**

Let us worship God.

Let us learn from the Spirit. Amen!

*OPENING HYMN: *Love Your Neighbor and Forgive*

HYMN PRINTED ON THE NEXT PAGE

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

We encourage you to greet each other verbally or by a friendly wave of peace

Do you have any St. Patrick's Day family traditions?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Rev. Andrea Philips

Congregation sings:

***Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.***

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (*unison*)

Teaching God,

We want to learn your ways.

We want to learn the ways of forgiveness.

We want to learn the ways of grace.

We want to learn your ways of love.
 That is part of why we return to your text week after week,
 because we are hungry to be more like you.
 So as we prepare to listen to your good Word,
 calm the noise in our minds.
 Center our spirits to focus on you
 so that we might learn and hear what we have missed in this story before.
 God, we want to learn your ways.
 Meet us here.
 Speak your truth.
 Help us listen.
 Amen.

Love Your Neighbor and Forgive

REDHEAD NO. 76 (7.7.7.7.7)

Words by Anna Strickland, 2023

Music by Richard Redhead, 1853



"Love your neigh - bor and for - give" Words so sim - ple
 Sounds of bombs and bul - lets ring War is all we've
 Love is ris - ky, peace is faint And for-give - ness



yet so hard We have wounds be - cause we've lived
 ev - er known Pac - i - fists are framed as weak
 feels na - ive All are sin - ners, all are saints



Cal - lus - es en - fold our hearts Jes - us reach - es
 We re - ly on might a - lone Jes - us paves the
 And we all God's grace re - ceive So we fol - low



out to touch Wounds and hearts that hold too much
 paths of peace Ev - en as the threats in - crease
 mer - cy's way Soft - en - ing our hearts to grace

SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 18:15-22*
Psalms 119:9-16

SERMON: *Forgiveness: what it is and what it is not*

Rev. Liza Arulampalam

MUSICAL RESPONSE: *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross*

Center Church Quartet

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*unison*)

Holy God,

We long to be lifelong learners.

We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind.

Instead, we often live as if we know best.

We forget that the disciples called you “Rabbi, Teacher.”

Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious.

Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best.

Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers.

Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, “How many times should we forgive?”—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters.

With hope and humility we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

G. Martin
Center Church Choir

*DOXOLOGY:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here be-low;

Praise God a-bove, you heaven-ly host: Praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

OFFERTORY PRAYER & AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*responsive*)

One: We believe that questions are a building block of faith.

All: “How many times should I forgive?”

“Jesus, where are you going?”

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.

“Where does it hurt?”

“What do you need?”

“How can I help?”

We believe that God is a teacher.

“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

“Here I am.”

“Send me.”

We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,

with all our heart,

with all our mind,

with all our strength.

We believe. Help our unbelief.

In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN: NCH 43 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE: *Thou Art The Rock*

H. Mulet

Center Church News & Announcements

Subscribe to our E-News newsletter for up-to-date news and happenings at Center

Church: <https://centerchurchhartford.org/>

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/OzymYij/CenterChurch>

And, don't forget to follow us on FB!



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: Tuesday thru Thursday, 9:30am to 2:30pm

Library Hours by Appointment

P 860.249.5631 F 860.246.3915 www.centerchurchhartford.org

Senior Pastor: The Reverend Liza Arulampalam (ext. 202)

Coordinator for Justice & Faith Formation Ministries: Dr. Eric Hearst (ext 209)

*If you'd like to meet with Pastor Liza,
please schedule a time by
sending her an email at pastor@cchartford.org*

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean

Director of Music/Organist: Robert F. Gilbert (ext. 204)

Church Office Manager: Emily McKenna (ext. 200)

Bookkeeper: Brenda Russell (ext. 201)

Sexton: Thomas St. Amant

Meals Program Coordinator: Carrie Howe (ext 205)

Nursery Care: Tina Franklin

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[Would you like to learn more about Center Church? Email us at info@cchartford.org](mailto:info@cchartford.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!

Church Information

ON STREET PARKING is available during Sunday Worship Services on Gold Street and on the west side of Lewis Street, and is FREE on Sundays. The church is maintaining our relationship with the Traveler's Garage which is temporarily closed due to Covid-19. Stay tuned as we partner with other garages in the area.

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. Church School is not held during the Summer.

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 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.

The latest issue of **CENTER CHURCH E-NEWS** is available on our church website. If you would like a paper copy mailed to you, please contact us at info@cchartford.org / 860-249-5631