



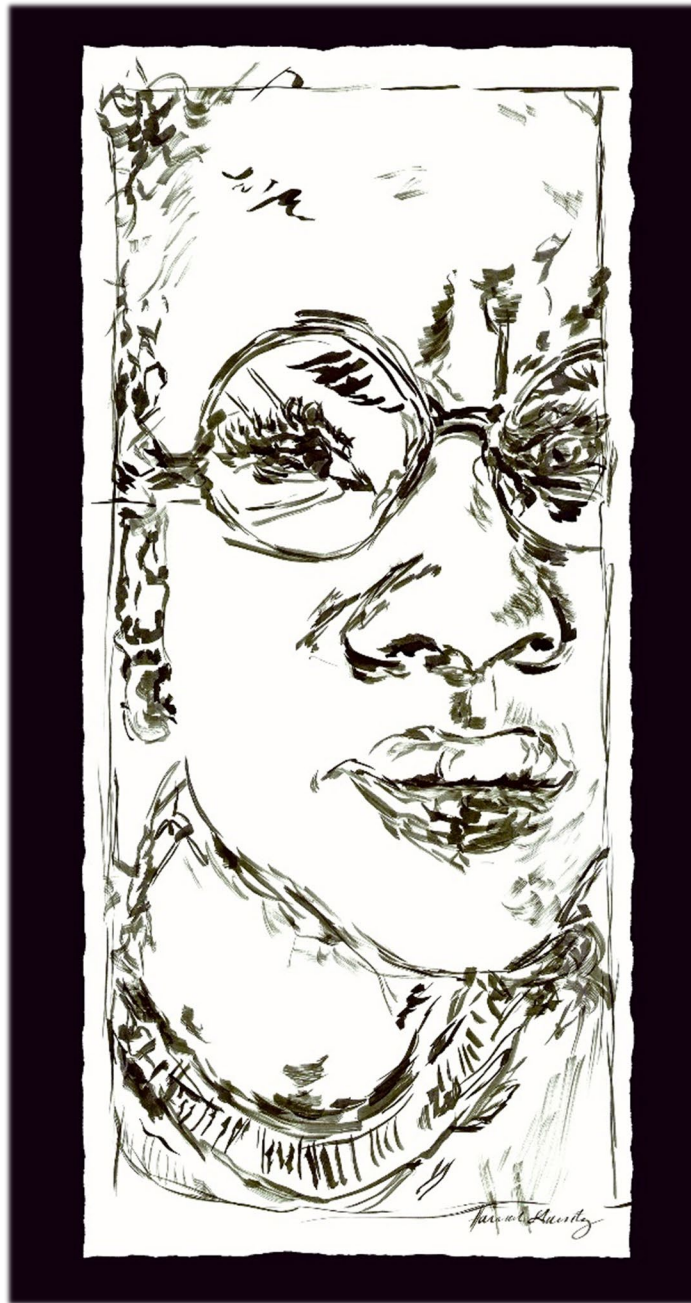
*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of The United Church of Christ*



**Order of Worship for
Easter Sunday**

March 31, 2024, 10:30am

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



Where? Hannah Garrison
Ink on paper

WANDERING HEART: "AND I HOPE" – EASTER SUNDAY

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Te Deum*

M. Charpentier
Erik Tunkel and William Valenti, Trumpets
Christopher Latournes, Timpani

WELCOME

EASTER GREETING:
Pastor: Christ is Risen
Congregation: He is Risen Indeed!

CHORAL INTROIT: *Gloria*

W. A. Mozart
Center Church Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Yesterday we thought death had won.

Yesterday we thought all was lost.

Yesterday we thought Christ was gone.

All: But not today.

Today we know that love has won.

Today we know that hope is real.

Today we know that Christ is here.

We have a reason to hope.

We have a reason to sing!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Christ is risen today.

*OPENING HYMN: NCH 233 *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*

tune: EASTER HYMN

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

How many Easters have you celebrated at Center Church?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

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*)

God of new beginnings,

On that first Easter morning, the disciples struggled to hear the good news.

Doubt clouded their minds.

Negativity took root and hope vanished with a simple shake of their heads.

As we return to this familiar text, help us to hear differently this morning.

Open our ears that we might hear

the sound of Alleluias ringing through this text.

**Open up our minds that the mystery and joy of Easter
might feel within reach.**

**Open up our hearts that we might believe
the unbelievable.**

And like Peter, in this hearing, may we move closer to you.

God of the empty tomb, we are hungry for your good news.

Speak to us now.

With hope in our hearts we listen and we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE: *Luke 24:1-12*

SERMON: *The Power of "I Don't Know"*

Rev. Liza Arulampalam

HYMN: NCH 433 *In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*responsive*)

The stone is rolled away!

We assume it is a mistake.

The angels say, "He is not here!"

We assume their news is fake.

The women tell the story,

but we do not want to hear it.

Peter runs to the tomb,

but we do not understand.

Forgive us, God, for thinking an empty tomb
is nothing more than a prank.

**Forgive us for seeing discarded burial cloths
and still holding tight to death.**

Forgive us for pushing away reasons to hope
when you are alive and well in the world.

Teach us to see what you see.

Unravel the threads of our unbelief.

Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

LORD'S PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY: *Hallelujah* FROM MOUNT OF OLIVES

L. V. Beethoven
Center Church Choir

*DOXOLOGY:

Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God, all crea-tures here be-low;

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER & AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*unison*)

We may weep through the longest nights.

We may stare at the empty tomb with more questions than answers.

We may run our fingers over the burial cloths and still long for more.

But today, we are a people of hope.

We believe in new beginnings.

We believe that the God who created the world is stronger than death.

**We believe that Jesus abides among us,
healing, teaching, and leaving fingerprints throughout this world.**

We believe that a tomb could not hold him.

We believe that the sun does rise.

**We believe that Peter was there
with questions, awe, and faith the size of a mustard seed.**

**We believe that the story is not over yet,
for God is among us.**

Today we are a people of hope.

*CLOSING HYMN: *Crown Him With Many Crowns*

tune: DIADEMATA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION & POSTLUDE: The Hallelujah Chorus FROM MESSIAH G. F. Handel

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

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