



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



**Order of Worship for  
December 3, 2023, 10:30am**

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

## THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*\*Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

ORGAN PRELUDE: Noel

H. Mulet

WELCOME

BECOMING PRESENT – AN ADVENT RITUAL

Leader: In our Advent series, we are celebrating the gift of being truly present — to each other and to the call of God to make this world a better place. We can be the gift of presence with those who are experiencing life as less-than-peaceful. But this might also be true of how we are personally feeling at this moment. Our lives can feel a bit chaotic or in need of a makeover. The Good News is that God is continually making a way for do-overs. In this we can find peace, even when life doesn't feel so peaceful. This week we focus on what it means to be a gift of non-anxious presence for those who need it most.

*Dan Theriault, Soloist:*

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?*

*If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;*

*If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;*

*Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.*

Reader: We unwrap a present on this second Sunday of Advent with great anticipation for the gift that God will reveal.

**People: We open our hearts as we open the gift!**

Reader: The promise of Peace is the Divine Gift we receive.

**People: And what will we do with it?**

Reader: The gift of Christ's peace reminds us that we can have serenity even in the midst of non-peaceful situations. Peace is not simply the absence of conflict.

Peace is an ever-present gift that we can open at any time when we stop, breathe, and trust that we are never alone.

And the gift of peace we can give is to be present for those who feel alone.

**People: We light this Candle of Peace as a sign that we will be present with peace in the world.**

**[congregation joins singer]**

**What can I give Him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;**

**If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;**

**Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.**

PRAYER OF PRESENCE (*unison*)

**Holy Living Light of God, you are our Peaceful Presence.**

**Let this peace grow in our lives each day, so we can be a Present of Peace to others.**

**Unwrap and open our hearts. May it be so.**

**Amen.**

OPENING CAROL: NCH 116 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (verses 2, 6, 7)

tune: VENI EMMANUEL

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

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

Do you prefer your hot chocolate with or without marshmallows?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

**Congregation Sings:**

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.**

**Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

SCRIPTURE: *Mark 1:1-8*

SERMON: *A Voice in the Wilderness*

Dr. Eric Hearst

**\*CAROL: NCH 133 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (vs. 1 and 4)**

tune: ST. LOUIS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Dan Theriault, Soloist:*

*Right here and right now we open our senses  
to see and perceive the gifts we've been given,  
to know and believe that what we must do  
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.*

PRAYER & QUESTIONS

***Soloist and Congregation:***

***Right here and right now we open our senses  
to see and perceive the gifts we've been given,  
to know and believe that what we must do  
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.***

PRAYER

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

G. Holst  
Center Church Choir  
Elizabeth Stassen and Stewart Battle, soloists

\*DOXOLOGY: *O Come Let Us Adore Him*

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,  
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord! A-men.

The image shows a musical score for a doxology. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line in G major (one sharp) and a bass line. The lyrics are "O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,". The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord! A-men." and includes a piano accompaniment in the bass line.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

\*CLOSING CAROL: NCH 117 *Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates*

tune: TRURO

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE: *Noel*

L. C. Daquin

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## 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!



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### 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](http://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](mailto: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 12<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:info@cchartford.org) / 860-249-5631