



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



**Order of Worship for**  
**August 4, 2024      10:00 am**

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



ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - COMMUNION SUNDAY

*\*Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

PIANO PRELUDE      *Great is thy Faithfulness*      *arr. B. Walters*

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God of mystery, You called Ananias by name, and he responded,

**All: "Here I am."**

One: You called Paul to the work of your Church, and he responded

**All: By giving his life to your Word.**

One: Similarly, you call us into community and faith,

**All: So we respond with love and time, energy and hope. We respond with worship.**

One: Let us worship the God of transformation and grace.

**All: Amen.**

INVOCATION

\*HYMN NCH 300 Jesus Shall Reign, Where E'er the Sun      Tune: DUKE STREET

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*Children are dismissed to their classrooms as the congregation sings:*  
**Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-ja (3X) Halleluja! Hal-le-lu-ja!**      Caribbean Melody

SCRIPTURE      Acts 9: 1-20 (NRSV)

SERMON      *Lord, I Know I've Been Changed:*

*The Conversion of Saul to Paul - Discovering a New Path*

The Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst

SONG      Change My Heart, O God

E. Espinosa

*Change my heart, O God,  
Make it ever true;  
Change my heart, O God,  
May I be like you.*

*You are the Potter,  
I am the clay;  
Mold me and make me,  
This is what I pray.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: God of new life,  
What would we give to have you appear with a flash of light and a clear voice like  
you did for Saul?

**All: Maybe then, our doubts would disappear.**

One: Maybe then, we would live as you called us to live.

**All: However, when our lives depend on faith, we forget your surprising grace.  
Instead, we draw lines around enemies and friends, who's in and who's out.  
We see the "other," faster than we see our "neighbor," and refuse second chances.**

One: Pull the scales from our eyes.

**All: Help us see as you see. Help us live as you live, and forgive us when we fail to.  
Humbly we pray, Amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

### Words of Institution

### Invitation to the Table

One: In Luke's Gospel we read that Jesus, at the table with two of the disciples, took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that as the church was gathered, often in the homes of the believers, Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and community, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

**ALL: Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we gather at your table to know you in the breaking of the bread.**

### UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior who taught us to pray saying: *Our Father (and Mother), ...***

### INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY      Be Not Afraid

B. Dufford

*Dan Theriault*

### \*DOXOLOGY:

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

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

### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*HYMN (See Insert) Here I Am, Lord

D. Schutte

*v1*  
*I, the Lord of sea and sky*  
*I have heard my people cry*  
*All who dwell in dark and sin*  
*My hand will save*

*v2*  
*I, the Lord of snow and rain*  
*I have borne my people's pain*  
*I have wept for love of them*  
*They turn away (to chorus)*

*Chorus:*  
*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?*  
*I have heard you calling in the night*  
*I will go, Lord, if you lead me*  
*I will hold your people in my heart*

*v3*  
*I will break their hearts of stone*  
*Give them hearts for love alone*  
*I will speak my words to them*  
*Whom shall I send? (to chorus)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## COMMISSION AND BLESSING

One: Christ, the bread of life, sends you out to feed others. Whoever comes to Christ will not be hungry or thirsty.

**All: We will share our lives with brothers and sisters. We seek to offer them the bread from heaven.**

One: Join the saints in building up the body of Christ. Seek to equip others for the work of ministry.

**All: We find unity in our relationship with God. We seek to grow toward the full stature of Christ.**

One: The Spirit will go with you and dwell with you. Receive with joy the salvation Christ offers each day.

**All: We are being healed even as we serve. We are empowered daily as we share love.**

One: Amen

**All: Amen.**

## SUNG CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

D. Schutte

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?*  
*I have heard you calling in the night*  
*I will go, Lord, if you lead me*  
*I will hold your people in my heart*