



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



Easter Order of Worship

April 20, 2025 10:30 am

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



In the Direction of Hope

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden;
I will be there soon.

I'm not the fastest runner,
Lord knows that,
but these legs are moving.

I suppose I could blame my weary spirit for the
slow speed.

I could blame the grief I've shoved into my
pockets and
laid around my neck.

I could blame my own hesitation to hope,
a hesitation that clings like mud.

But I don't know that Jesus cares about my speed.
So tell God when you see them—

I am on my way.
Wait for me in the garden.
I will be there soon.

*Poem by
Rev. Sarah Speed*

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR APRIL 20, 2025
RESURRECTION SUNDAY
EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN: GRIEF AND HOPE

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

PRELUDE Te Deum

M. Charpentier

*Erik Tunkel & William Valenti, trumpet
Christopher Latournes, timpani*

WELCOME

*The Rev. Liza Arulampalam
Senior Pastor*

One: He is Risen!

All: He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

CHORAL INTROIT

Hallelujah (From *Christ on the Mount of Olives*)
Center Church Choir with Brass and Timpani

L. V. Beethoven

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: My dear friends,
we have known grief.
We have known loss.
We have known the long road, tired and winding.
We have whispered prayers on bended knees.
We have stared at the sky, empty of stars.
But today—

All: today we know hope.

One: Today we know life.

All: Today we know the sound of Alleluias.

Today we know that death does not have the last word.
Today we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God.
It is Easter.
May hope find you.
And may you know, deep in your bones,
that today is a new day.

Together: Alleluia! Amen.

*OPENING HYMN NCH 233 Christ the Lord is Risen Today

EASTER HYMN

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

Center Church Children's Choir

"Te Ahroa"

"This is the Day"

Māori *waiata*

J. Macintosh

Children's Sermon

Rev. Liza Arulampalam

Congregation sings:

Caribbean Melody

Halle, Hallelujah, Halle-lu-jah! (3x)

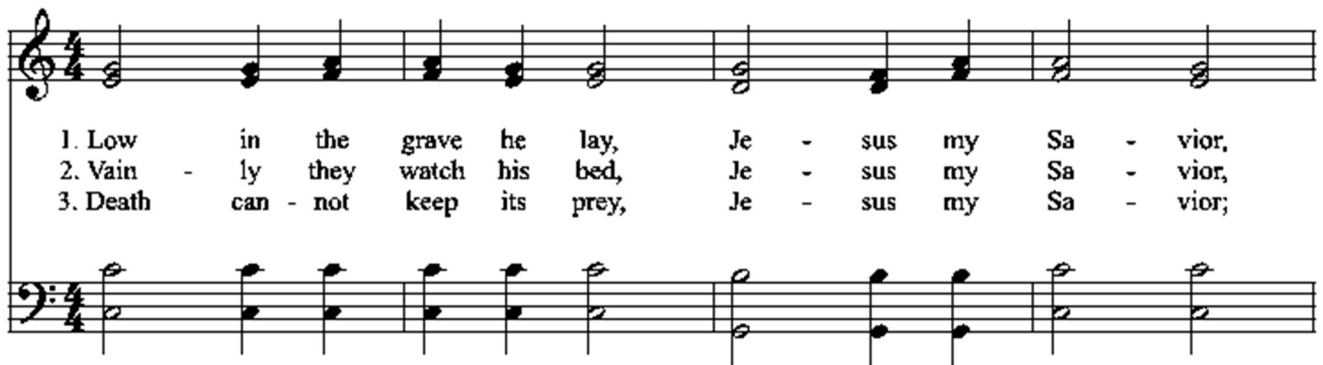
Hallelujah, Halle-lu-jah!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Luke 24: 1-12

HYMN (*Insert*) Low in the Grave He Lay

CHRIST AROSE



1. Low in the grave he lay, Je - sus my Sa - vior,
2. Vain - ly they watch his bed, Je - sus my Sa - vior,
3. Death can - not keep its prey, Je - sus my Sa - vior;



wait - ing the co - ming day, Je - sus my Lord!
vain - ly they seal the dead, Je - sus my Lord!
he tore the bars a - way, Je - sus my Lord!

Refrain

Up from the grave he a - rose; with a

migh - ty tri - umph o'er his foes; he a -

rose a vic - tor from the dark do - main, and he

lives for - e - ver, with his saints to reign. He a -

rose! He a - rose! Hal - le - lu - jah! Christ a - rose!

SERMON

Between Grief and Hope

Rev. Liza Arulampalam

MUSICAL RESPONSE

In Christ Alone

K. Getty and S. Townsend

Arunan Arulampalam, Dan Theriault & David Reynolds

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*Responsive*)

One: The Gospel of Luke says, "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told the apostles [of the resurrection]. But these words seemed to the disciples an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb."

**All: Forgive us, God,
when good news lands in our lap and we refuse to believe it.
Forgive us, God,
when grief and fear crowd out any room in our hearts for hope.
Forgive us, God,
when we dismiss the stories of others and minimize the voices of our neighbors.**

One: In a world that teeters between grief and hope, show us how to be like Peter.

**All: Show us how to hold onto hope.
Show us how to run toward you. Amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Family of Faith,
At first, the disciples did not believe that Jesus had risen. They stayed locked in an upper room, shaking and afraid. Peter was the only exception. Fortunately, Jesus loves us on our best days and our worst days.

**All: God's grace exists for us when we are hopeful and when we are grieving,
when we are shouting and when we are silent,
when we are full of faith and when we are full of fear.
God's grace exists for us on the best days, the worst days,
and every day in between.
Thanks be to God for this good news!
Alleluia! Amen.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Hallelujah, Amen! (From *Judas Maccabeus*)
Center Church Choir with Brass and Timpani

G. F. Handel

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDRETH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God, above, you heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Responsive*)

One: In the dark before dawn,

All: we believe that God is alive.

In the midst of our grief,

we believe the Spirit is at work.

In the chaos of our broken world,

we believe that love is on the loose.

For no stone could keep God at bay,

and no violence could keep God's love from us.

So today we sing,

Alleluia!

For somewhere in between our belief and doubt,

hope lives.

Christ has died,

and Christ has also risen.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NCH 301 Crown with Your Richest Crowns

DIADEMATA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

As you leave this place,
may you find God in every messy middle.
May you know that the world is bigger than two sides.
May you trust that you are made in the image of God,
and therefore, you contain multitudes.
So may you move through this world with an open heart,
with a curious mind, and with the confidence that you do not go alone.
God is with you in the mountains,
in the valleys,
and everywhere in between.
Believe that good news, and go in peace.

CHORAL BENEDICTION & POSTLUDE Hallelujah! (From *Messiah*)
Center Church Choir with Brass and Timpani

G. F. Handel

*Thank you to everyone who participated in worship this morning.
Go in Peace, proclaiming the Good News of the Risen Christ! Hallelujah, Amen!*

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If you donated an Easter plant to decorate our sanctuary this morning, please take it home as a reminder of the Resurrection. The remaining plants will be distributed to our homebound members and friends.

Please join us on the portico (front steps) for our annual family photo and an extended fellowship after worship. All children are invited to participate in our annual Easter Egg Hunt in Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground next to the Meetinghouse.