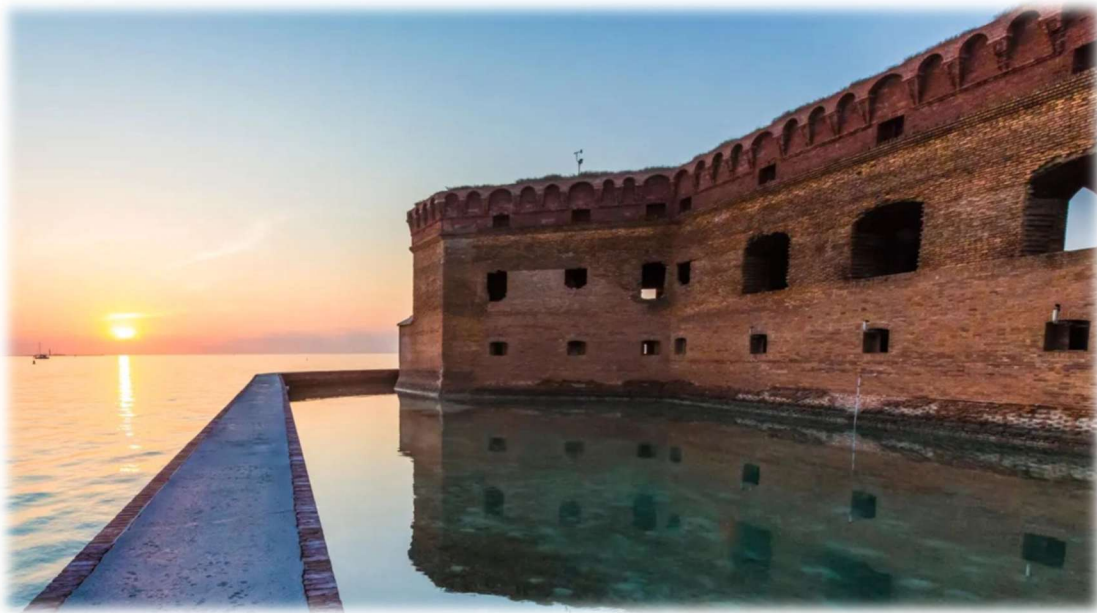




*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of The United Church of Christ*



Order of Worship for
June 1, 2025 10:00 am

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

ORDER OF WORSHIP – JUNE 1, 2025
CENTER CHURCH ROAD TRIP: DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK
EMANCIPATION

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

PIANO PRELUDE Amazing Grace

arr. B. Walters

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4: 14 - 20

One:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us—
not just in this place but in each heart that longs for healing.

All:

**God has anointed us to bring good news to the poor,
to comfort the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to those held captive.**

One:

Come, all who are weary and burdened,
all who hunger for justice and hope.

All:

**We come to worship the One who sets us free,
who brings light to our darkness and peace to our souls.**

Together:

**Let us worship the Lord with joy,
for the Spirit of God is moving in our midst!**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*OPENING HYMN NCH 547 Amazing Grace

AMAZING GRACE

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 61:1
 Luke 4: 14-20

SERMON The Courage to Live Free

Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst

MUSICAL RESPONSE NCH 474 I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me

I'M SO GLAD

RITUAL OF CONFESSION

Call to Confession

Unison Prayer of Confession

**God of freedom and justice,
You sent Your Son to proclaim good news and to set the captives free.
Yet we confess that we have often ignored Your call.
We have been silent when we should have spoken,
comfortable while others suffer,
apathetic in the face of injustice.
We have clung to our own security rather than seeking the liberation of all Your children.**

**Forgive us, Lord.
Open our eyes to the suffering around us,
unclench our hands from what we hold too tightly,
and renew our hearts with compassion and courage.
May we live as people set free by Your Spirit,
and may our lives proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

One: Hear the good news:
Jesus stood and read the words of the prophet Isaiah,
and then declared, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."
Through Christ, the good news is fulfilled.
The poor are lifted, the blind receive sight, and the captives are set free.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made new.

Together: Thanks be to God! Amen.

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, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. 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 prayers.

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

Breaking of Bread & Pouring of Cup

Sharing of the Elements

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...**"

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Deep River

Dan Theriault, soloist

African American Spiritual

*DOXOLOGY NCH 780

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts:
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!***

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

One: Liberating God,
You have broken the chains that held us captive
and invited us to walk in the freedom of Your love.

Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude
and as instruments of Your emancipation work in the world.
Use them to break cycles of injustice,
to lift the oppressed,
and to proclaim good news to the poor.

May our offering today
not only bless others,
but free us from the grip of fear and self-reliance,
that we may trust more deeply in You.

In the name of Christ, our Redeemer and Deliverer, we pray.

All: Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NCH 2 Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!

African American Spiritual
Arr. J. F. Johnson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

*Go now in the power of the Spirit,
As Christ went into Galilee—full of grace and truth.
May you proclaim good news to the poor,
Bring hope to the brokenhearted,
And live as vessels of freedom and healing.
The Spirit of the Lord is upon you—
Go in peace, to love and to serve.*

Amen.

PIANO POSTLUDE Let My People Go

B. Walters

Thank you to everyone who participated in worship! Go in Peace!