



center church
the first church of christ UCC

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**Choosing this Community, Walking in Love
& Acting like Jesus Christ**



E-NEWS

Jan. 2, 2026

**We are the
Body of Christ
Together!
In Person & Online!**

This Week in Worship - Sunday, Jan. 4

Join us at 10:30 AM - 675

Main Street



"King Tingz," by Nic Faison

Worship with us this Week!

**Sunday, Jan 4 at 10:30 AM,
In Person - and Online!**

New Year Blessings, Center Church!

Arise, Shine, for Your Light is Come!

This Sunday in worship we will celebrate the arrival of the wise ones, the magi, to Bethlehem to visit with and worship the new-born Christ child. We will also celebrate Holy Communion and receive Star Gifts to lead us into the new year. You won't want to miss it!

And remember that at 4 PM on Sunday we're hosting out 20th Annual Greater Hartford Messiah Sing and Concert - this year with soloists, brass and timpani!

Blessings, and Peace, and a Happy New Year to you all,

~The Worship Team

January 4th, 2026 4:00 pm

**Music and the Arts at
20th Annual  center church
the first church of christ UCC
Messiah Community Sing**

Singers Arrive at 3 and Seated by 3:30 PM

**Location: Center Church Meeting House,
Corner of Main & Gold in Downtown Hartford**

**Parking: Free Downtown Street Parking
& Travelers Garage (Prospect Street)
with Soloists, Timpani, & Brass**

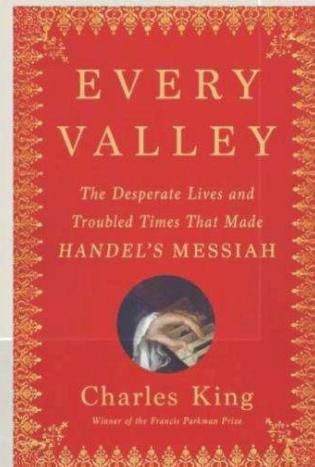


**675 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CT**

**Join us for our special
20th anniversary event:
Book talk and Q&A with Charles King
on Monday, Jan. 5, 2025 at 7 PM**

The link to the book talk and more information about the event are available at the website for The First Church of Christ in Hartford, below:

www.centerchurchhartford.org



The Church At Prayer

We are keeping the following members, friends and their families in our prayers this week. If you have prayer concerns to share, please email Pastor Liza, pastor@cchartford.org, or the Care Team, careteam@cchartford.org.

Jane Macomber and family; John Conley, Jr.; Sally Wagan and her family; Ephraim Adams and Nancy J. Adams; Gilberto Mercado and family; The family and friends of Christine "Chrissy" Camacho; the family and friends of Marilyn Watson; Richard Markham and family; Tina Bobbitt; Lita Rathnam; Cyndi Taplin and family; Dimekwan French and the French family; Diane Dwelley, Rev. Isaac Lawson, Anita Hawkins,...

ICYMI: 2026 Pledge Form

As we come to the end of 2025, there's still time to complete your submit your 2026 Pledge.

Follow the links below to read Pastor Liza's Stewardship Letter and the Pledge Form for the upcoming year.

Pastor Liza's Stewardship Letter

2026 Pledge Form

From Outreach: New Open Hours



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THE CENTER ANGEL @ LEWIS & GOLD

Winter Open Hours

Tuesdays 11AM - 1PM

Open Hours for Outreach

Community Closet & Light Refreshments

Additional Services by Phone Appointment

Come Visit us for:

Help with photo ID, birth certificates & other documents.
Assistance with paperwork or applications for services.

**Ben & Friends Community Breakfast: 7-8 AM
2nd & 4th Saturdays from Dec through March**

**Free & Confidential HIV and Hepatitis TESTING
with CTHRA, 4th Tuesdays, 11AM-1PM**

**To learn more about The Center Angel at Center
Church, please email Outreach Director
Carrie Howe: chowe@cchartford.org**



860.249.5631



centerchurchhartford.org

*The Center Angel @ Lewis & Gold is a mission initiative of
The First Church of Christ in Hartford, "Center Church," a 501 c3 non-profit organization.*

From the Visionary Team **Fall Updates**

The Visionary Team has identified three areas for our community to focus on in the coming program year, based on notes from our May church retreat:

- Increase the engagement of children in worship in multiple ways.
- Create a short-term Faith Formation Strategy Team to create a vision for our ministries with children and youth. The team would

work starting in September, would make budget recommendations for the congregational budget meeting in November, and would report to the congregation at our Annual Meeting next spring. *We commissioned this working group in worship on Sunday. They will have their first meeting this week and will meet regularly through November.*

- Start a small group to move forward with exploring the creation of a 501(c)(3) that will help support our ministries with folks in transition. *This group held their first meeting last month; the next meeting is scheduled for October 22. More updates to come!*

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the retreat and provided input and prayers in support of our two priority ministries! There is still time to join one of these working groups; simply email Lesley Morgan Thompson with your interest!

~ The Visionary Team

Lesley Morgan Thompson, Alvin Thompson, Chris Graesser, Catherine Thompson Maclean, Brother Eric J. Hearst, Steven Lewis

If you are interested in being a part of Visionary Team, Center Church's discernment process, planning retreats or facilitating discussions about discernment please contact [Lesley Morgan Thompson](#) for more information.

Faith Formation Working Group

- Kurt Moyer
- Deb Moyer
- Martha Rae Sunshine Nelson
- Carrie Howe
- Lesley Morgan Thompson
- Brother Eric J. Hearst

501(c)3 Working Group

- Holly Wells
- Carrie Howe
- Chris Graesser
- Steven Lewis
- Brother Eric J. Hearst
- Pastor Liza

**Keeping You Posted... From you,
for you!**

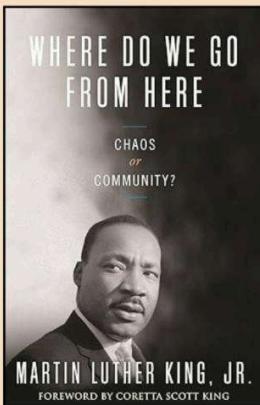
Center Church Community - If you have something you want to feature in the Center Church e-news email a small paragraph and any relevant photos to the church office by Wednesday afternoon for publication on Fridays.



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JOIN CENTER CHURCH FOR THESE BOOK STUDIES

ALL BOOK STUDIES TAKE PLACE ONLINE VIA ZOOM



WINTER 2026 *Where Do We Go From Here:
Chaos or Community?*

by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
from Beacon Press

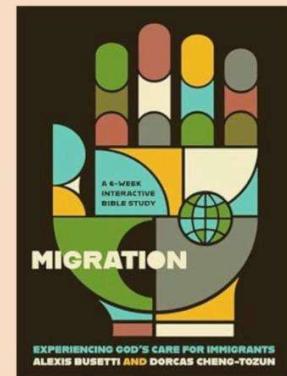
In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., isolated himself from the demands of the civil rights movement, rented a house in Jamaica with no telephone, and labored over his final manuscript. In this significantly prophetic work, which has been unavailable for more than ten years, we find King's acute analysis of American race relations and the state of the movement after a decade of civil rights efforts.

**Migration: Experiencing
God's Care for Immigrants**

SPRING 2026

by Alexis Busetti and Dorcas Cheng-Tozun
from Intervarsity Press

Discover the heart of God in one of the most profound human experiences—migration. Using a diverse mix of Scripture, essays, spoken word, visual art, and personal testimonies, this thought-provoking study is not just about understanding the migration narrative in Scripture but also about reshaping your perspective on migration today.



Greater Hartford
— Interfaith —
Action Alliance

GHIAA Victories & Follow-Ups

This Fall, GHIAA was able to celebrate some wins:

- **Courthouse Protections:** [HB 8004](#) bars law enforcement from conducting civil arrests without a judicial warrant in state courthouses or on courthouse grounds, and prohibits agents from wearing masks while conducting their duties at courthouses unless medically necessary. This safeguards access to due process in the justice system for all of us, and in particular for our immigrant community members. ([HB 8004, Sec. 12 and 13](#))
- **Data Protections:** [HB 8004](#) also prohibits all public agencies and officials from sharing people's personal information unless specifically required by law. This protects every one of us who has shared our information with the state in good faith, and particularly our immigrant community members, including tens of thousands of families who participate in Husky 4 Immigrants, hold drive-only licenses, enroll in school, etc. ([HB 8004, Sec. 14](#))
- **Federal Response Fund:** [HB 8003](#) allocates \$500M from the state budget surplus to make up for loss of federal funds for SNAP, WIC, LIHEAP, health care, school meals, child care assistance, or housing assistance. These funds are available from now through Feb. 4, 2026, when the spring legislative session begins, and their spending is directed by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management.
- **Housing Affordability:** [HB 8002](#) accomplishes a variety of important steps toward the creation of affordable housing and support for people experiencing homelessness. GHIAA was not working directly on this bill, but it is certainly aligned with our values and priorities around housing affordability. For more details, check out this [summary](#) from our friends at the Partnership from Strong Communities.

While we can absolutely celebrate these wins, we also stay focused on the work ahead, too. On the radar ahead, we have:

- **Federal Response Fund:** making sure that the \$500M that has been set aside is actually spent before the deadline to alleviate the pain CT residents are already feeling from the federal cuts.
- **Remote Hearings:** allowing people to participate in court appearances remotely, as was done during the pandemic, so that immigrants can remain in a safe location while they show up for court.
- **Protecting Immigrant Health Care:** ensuring that no one in CT loses health coverage, regardless of immigration status.
- **State and Local Resources:** prohibiting the CT National Guard and other state/local resources from being used for federal immigration enforcement purposes.
- **Additional priorities** will be developed based on the ongoing work of our GHIAA issue teams.

And lastly, it is important that our elected officials know that we are paying attention to their positions. It is important to thank those leaders who act in alignment with our priorities and values, and to share our disappointment with those who act in opposition.

- We are asking GHIAA leaders to follow up with your elected officials using the following steps: Check to see how your legislators voted on each bill:
 1. Immigrant Protections (HB 8004) – [House](#) and [Senate](#)
 2. Federal Response Fund (HB 8003) – [House](#) and [Senate](#)

3. Housing (HB 8002) – House and Senate

- Find the contact information for your state representative and senator [here](#)
- Send them an email expressing your gratitude and/or disappointment with their votes. You can adapt the following template. Make sure you fill in the blanks with your own information and delete anything extraneous! As always, feel free to use your own words.

Thank you, as always, for showing up faithfully for the ongoing work of justice.

Peace,
Jocelyn and the GHIAA Team



From the Center Church History Team

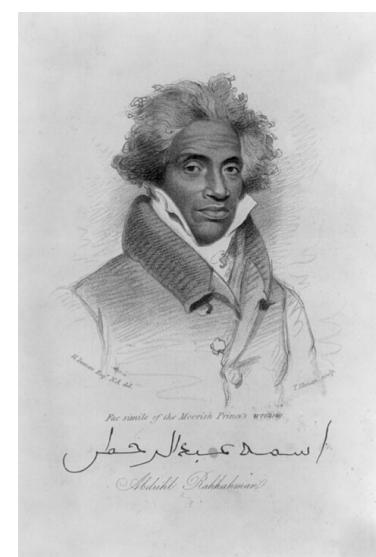
It is with great pleasure that we announce Center Church's formalized partnership with The Official Royal House of Sori.

We are honored to celebrate the life, legacy, story and journey of Prince Abdulrahman Ibrahim ibn Sori and the enduring legacy carried on by the Official Royal House of Sori and the Root Nine Foundation and Institute.

Thank you to our friends and partners who have made it all possible.

For more information about The Official Royal House of Sori, visit their website below.

<https://www.theofficialroyalhouseofsori.com/>





Pictured above: HRH Princess Karen, sovereign and head of the Official Royal House of Sori; Dr. Artemus Gaye, and many other descendants of Prince Sori; Mayors of Natchez, Mississippi and Hartford, CT; John Quincy Adams IV; Rev. Dr. Eric Hearst.

Read the full, official press release, linked below. We are looking forward to many more years of friendship and partnership with TORHOS and HRH Princess Karen.

Official Press Release - Nov. 9, 2025

And if you're interested in History or Research and want to be involved in the exciting things the History Team is doing, email [co-chair Andre Keitt](#) or [Brother Eric!](#)!





Center Church Teams: Help Wanted Community Board

The Outreach Team is looking for Volunteers to help with our Sunday Morning Coffee Ministry and for folks who are passionate about the missions of Center Church. For more information, contact Anita Hawkins or Cynthia Taplin.

The Worship Team is seeking volunteers to help with liturgy, ushering, and greeting. [Email Steven](#) or [Pastor Liza](#) to find out how you can help.

The Faith Formation Team is looking for help planning future events for our kiddos and church community. [Email Brother Eric](#) to find out more!

If your team needs help or volunteers for upcoming events, email the office to advertise here!

Updates From The Church Office:

Greetings, Center Church!

The Office is closed on Fridays. It is open Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 4 PM.

These hours are subject to change, and we will do our best to inform you of any departures.

Pastor Liza is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Brother Eric's sabbath days are Friday and Saturday. Carrie has drop-in

hours Wednesday and Fridays from 10 to 2.

Outside of these hours, you can leave a call and leave a voicemail for our office staff.

Church Administrator Steven Lewis x 200

Pastor Liza Arulampalam x 202

Brother Eric Hearst x 209

Outreach Director Carrie Howe x 205

Music Director Bob Gilbert x 204

Bookkeeper Brenda Russell x 201

Warmest Blessings,
Your Church Office Team

center church

Celebrating 30 Years of Open and Affirming

Choosing This Community.
Walking in Love.
Acting like Jesus Christ.

www.centerchurchhartford.org 
[@centerchurchhartford@](https://twitter.com/centerchurchhartford)
facebook.com/centerchurchhartford 



This Week's Celebrations!

Happy Birthday!

January 3 ~ Sierra Cicero

January 6 ~ Gregory Norsigian

January 8 ~ Jean-Luc Reynolds

***Please remember to wish members
of your church family a happy celebration!***

"Let There Be Light" Memorials



If you would like to light the steeple in memory or honor of a loved one, [please e-mail the Church Office](#) to make arrangements.

The Meeting House steeple will be lighted this week as follows:

January 1 ~ In tribute to the family of the late Harry E. Benson by the late Ethel A. Benson

January 1 ~ In memory of Mary E. Sammis, by the late Miss Mary Starr Rawlins

and the late Miss Edith F. Gorley

January 2 ~ In memory of Carleton S. Chase, by the late Mrs. Jeannette Chase Hatton

January 3 ~ In memory of Eliza S. Geer, by her nephew the late E. Selden Geer, Jr.

January 4 ~ In joyful memory of David Stetser Mankey and Katherine Cutts Mankey,

by their parents, sisters and brothers

January 4 ~ In loving memory of J. Maurice Hohlfeld on the occasion of his birthday,

by his wife Emma Hohlfeld

January 5 ~ In memory of his mother, Mrs. Clara Cooley Jacobus, by Melancthon Jacobus

January 5 ~ In loving memory of Susan Armstrong Ackerman by her parents Allen Ackerman and Joan O'Callaghan

January 6 ~ In memory of George C. Olcott, by his sister, the late
Mrs. Harry Santoorjian,

and by his late son, Jeffrey C. Olcott

January 6 ~ In loving memory of my parents, Webster and Beatrice
Culver, by Janice Culver

January 7 ~ In memory of Viola Bragg "Mom & Nana" on her birthday
by Earl, Cheryl, and the late Elaine Sanderson

January 7 ~ In memory of Clement Scott

January 7 ~ In celebration of the life of Dwight Tuthill by George
Francis and David Maclean

January 8 ~ As a tribute to William R. Tuthill

January 9 ~ In memory of her sister, Alice Hildebrand, by Dora
Hildebrand

January 10 ~ In loving memory of George A. Hammond

January 11 ~ In loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wolcott Buck,
by Mr. and Mrs. Robinson W. Buck, Daniel and Elizabeth

January 12 ~ In loving memory of Charles, Catherine and Pasqua
Alaimo, by Mary Alaimo Cavaleri

January 13 ~ In memory of Jane Peterson Markham, by her many
friends

January 13 ~ In memory of my dear friend J. Scott Hollenback
and in celebration of his birthday by Kristin Sherlock

January 13 ~ In memory of our son J. Scott Hollenback by Warren
and Virginia Hollenback

January 14 ~ In loving memory of her mother, Mrs. Mary Ella Dorell
Day and her grandfather, Dr. Day,
by Mrs. Jane Dorell Day Souerwine

January 15 ~ In loving memory of my dear friends, Emma Welcher
and Alice Erickson, by the late Janet Chen



Who do I talk to about...?

**With so many folks engaged in
the many ministries at Center
Church, it's sometimes hard to
know where to direct our
questions.**

**Fortunately, the CET and the Care Team have
put together a helpful sheet which answers
some of those questions.**

Follow the link below to

download the chart:

Care Team Contact Chart

Looking to be More Involved? Connect with a Center Church Team!

Let us know if you're interested in being a part of our teams! [Fill out this form to show your interest!](#)

The Worship Team:

Contact *Steven Lewis*,
slewis@cchartford.org

The Care Team:

Contact *Larry Roeming*,
LDRinCT@gmail.com

The Faith Formation Team:

Contact *Rev. Dr. Eric Hearst*,
ehearst@cchartford.org

The Outreach Team:

Contact *Anita Hawkins*,
anitasfarm1010@gmail.com

The History Team:

Contact *Andre Keitt*,
corykit1@yahoo.com

The Resource Team:

Contact *David Maclean*,
macleand596@gmail.com

The Community Relations Team:

Contact *Church Office*,
cctech@cchartford.org

The Visionary Team:

Contact: *Lesley Morgan-Thompson*
l.morganthompson@gmail.com

The Music the Arts Committee:

Contact: *Kate Robinson*,
kate@gallorobinson.com

The Outreach Corner at Lewis and Gold

Carrie's office hours are Wednesdays (10 AM - 2 PM) & Fridays (10AM - 3 PM); on the ground floor of the Church House building, at 60 Gold Street.

We are always taking donations for:

- Milk or coffee cream
- Bottled Water
- Hot chocolate
- Large Aluminum Food Trays
- Aluminum Foil
- Hygiene Items

- [Gift Cards](#)

Carrie Howe is available to receive donations anytime!

If you have a question regarding the meal program or if you'd like to volunteer, please contact Carrie!

Cell - 860-778-1210
chowe@cchartford.org

You can also call Steven at the Church Office (ext. 200) to arrange your drop off. Your generosity helps our Outreach Team continue to care for our Hartford neighbors! Thank you so much!



Center Church BED FUNDS at Hartford Hospital

Need help paying for medical or dental bills at Hartford Hospital?

Have a friend or family member in need?

Center Church BED FUNDS
may be available!

Click [HERE](#) to download information,
or send your inquiries to info@CCHartford.org,
or call Steven at the Church House,
860-249-5631 ext 200



Offerings

We truly appreciate those who continue to offer financial support! Remember, you can do so in three ways:

1. **Send a check** payable to "First Church of Christ in Hartford" to 60 Gold Street, Hartford, CT 06103;
2. **Set up EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer)** by [contacting Brenda](#) at the Church Office: (860) 249-5631; or
3. [Click the donate link](#) on our website to use your credit card.





Church Office Hours

Monday- Thursday, 9:30am-3:30 pm
(Closed Fridays)

See and Share Us On Social Media:



60 Gold Street, Hartford, CT 06103 · (860) 249-5631
www.centerchurchhartford.org

The First Church of Christ in Hartford | 60 Gold Street (Church House) Corner of Main & Gold Streets
(Meeting House) | Hartford, CT 06103 US

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