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



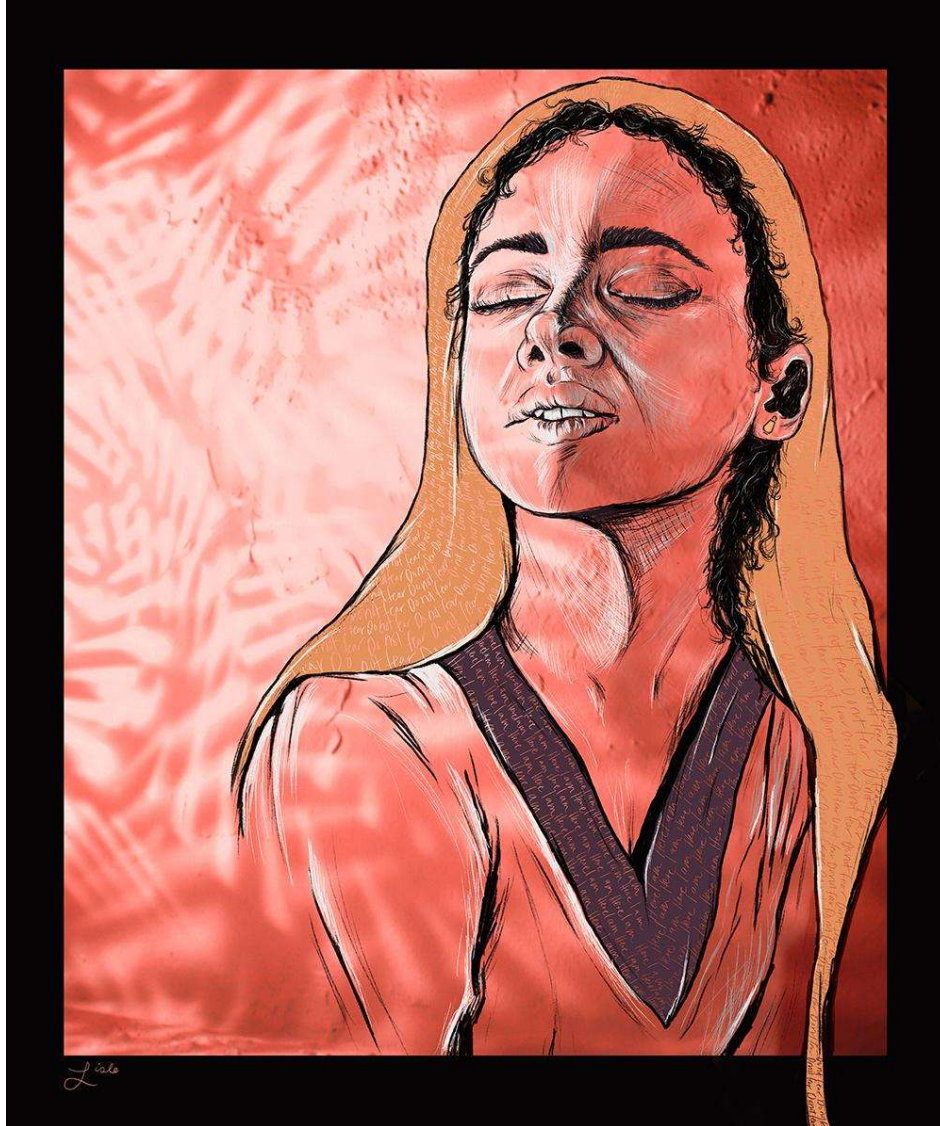
E-NEWS

Dec. 12, 2025

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

This Week in Worship - Sunday, Nov. 23

***Join us at 10:30 AM -
675 Main Street***



"Mary's Yes," by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Worship with us this Week!

**Sunday, December 14 at 10:30 AM,
In Person - and Online!**

Gaudete, Gaudete, Center Church!

Gaudete Sunday, Mary's Sunday, Pink Candle Sunday - no matter how you call it, it's the third week in Advent and we're rejoicing! We will rejoice because even in our fear, we are called forward to bring about the change and the kin-dom of which we dream.

This week, we will welcome the Sarah Hanahan Jazz Quartet back to Center Church for a service of Jazz Lessons and Carols. Pastor Liza will lead us in worship and share her next sermon in our "What Do You Fear?" series. Join us at 10:30, in person and online.

Blessings, and Peace,

~The Worship Team

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,...

From Pastor Liza:

A Special Prayer Request for the French Family

We regret to inform you of the passing of Damari French; family member of the Terrence and Priscilla French and the son of Buell French. Damari had attended Camp Asto Wamah growing up and his extended family have long been members of Center Church; Damari was 24 years old.

When arrangements are made and the services are scheduled we will update our church community. Until then, please hold Damari's family and friends, as well as the French Family in your hearts and prayers.

Join us this Advent *No matter what you fear,
know that The Good News is Louder.*

Good News is Louder than Fear

Join us this Advent at Center Church



On the Imagery of the Advent Series – the focal image of the lantern:

From the creative team at A Sanctified Art:

As we discussed our Advent theme and how hope and fear are interwoven in our lives, a vision emerged: hands gently cupped around candles at a vigil. When we gather at a vigil, fear is often present, weighing on us like a heavy fog. The candle in our hands can feel fragile, insignificant, the flame easily extinguished. But when we turn to our neighbors to spread the light, it multiplies, wrapping the whole community in warmth. The darkness is not eradicated; if anything, it further illuminates the flicker of the candles. In these vigil spaces, grief and fear dance with gratitude and hope. In these spaces, we find courage and unity. We are reminded that God is near. This vision captures our prayer for this Advent series: that it will illuminate both our hopes and our fears and remind us that God is near.

Fear can divide and paralyze us and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Might we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work?

Join us this Advent. We will gather to remember and hear the familiar stories as we continue to navigate unfamiliar and fear-filled times, insisting on radical, extraordinary and resilient Hope.

Blessings,

The Worship Team

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 Faith Formation: You're
Invited!**



**It's never too early to order your
Christmas Flowers!**



If you would like to donate a poinsettia to decorate our Meetinghouse for Christmastide, please fill out the form ASAP. Paper forms will be available in the coming weeks but the Electronic Dedication Form is Available now. The suggested donation is 20.00 per plant.

[Click this link to order your flowers today!](#)

From Outreach:
**Join us for Hartford's Annual
Longest Night Memorial Service**

Hartford's Annual Longest Night Memorial Service

Hosted at The First Church of Christ in Hartford
675 Main Street, Hartford CT

DEC. 18, 2025 - 7 PM



immediately following the
service will be a
fundraising sleepout to
benefit Center Church's
overnight warming center

Hands 
Caring in Action HARTFORD



First Presbyterian
Church of Hartford

EMANUEL
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN THE CITY FOR GOOD



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
CONNECTICUT'S CATHEDRAL



center church
the first church of christ UCC

IMMANUEL
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



RIVERFRONT
FAMILY CHURCH

If you're not able to attend the service or the sleepout fundraiser, we hope you'll consider making a monetary or in-kind donation of gently-used warm clothes and blankets or new personal hygiene products. For more information about what's needed and how you can help with our very important, life-saving mission, please email Outreach Director Carrie Howe at chowe@cchartford.org.

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!

It's THAT time of the year: Larry's Christmas Movies!



Larry Roeming will be doing his series of Christmas movies again this year — on the dates YOU chose from DEC. 15 to Dec. 26.

All movies are shown in the 1st floor parlor of 60 Gold Street.

[Download the schedule here, complete with short descriptions of each movie.](#)

Street Parking on Main, Gold, Atheneum Sq. and elsewhere downtown is free on weekends and on weekdays after 6:00 pm; there is also a parking garage on Pearl St., one block north of the Church House.

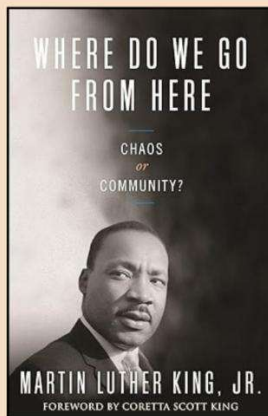
Soft drinks and popcorn provided. (Bring other beverages & snacks if you'd like.) Call Larry at 860-997-3573 for additional info.

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.



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

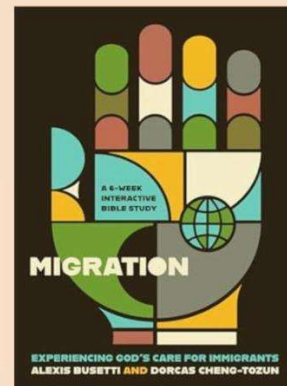
In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., isolated himself from the demands of the civil rights movement, rented a house in Jamaica with no telephone, and labored over his final manuscript. In this significantly prophetic work, which has been unavailable for more than ten years, we find King's acute analysis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



Calling all Center Church Youth (and their Adults)!

*Join youth from Faith Congregational, Immanuel
Congregational, First Church Middletown and Riverfront
Community Church in the Central CT Youth Group.*

Central Connecticut Youth Group Calendar 2025

September & October

Lollipop-looza Kick off Party	September 14th	5:30-7:30 pm
Youth Group Info Session & Zoom	September 21st	5:30-7:30 pm
Youth Group Session	October 5th	5:30-7:30 pm
Youth Group Session (\$ for lock-in due)	October 19th	5:30-7:30 pm

November & December

Lock-in Retreat (cost \$25 per youth)	Nov 7 @ 7 pm-Nov 8 @ 3 pm	
Friendsgiving YG Session	November 23rd	5:30-7:30 pm
Volunteering @ Immanuel House	December 7th	1:00-3:00 pm
Christmas Party	December 21st	5:30-7:30 pm

This group is open to those in 6th – 12th grade, born in 2007–2013. Youth receive an extravagant welcome and hospitality in a safe, affirming place. Community meals, supportive mentorship, fun games, hot topic discussions and exploration of a variety of prayer and contemplative practices are features of these twice-monthly gatherings!

Reach out to Brother Eric to learn more and to sign up!



GHIAA

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

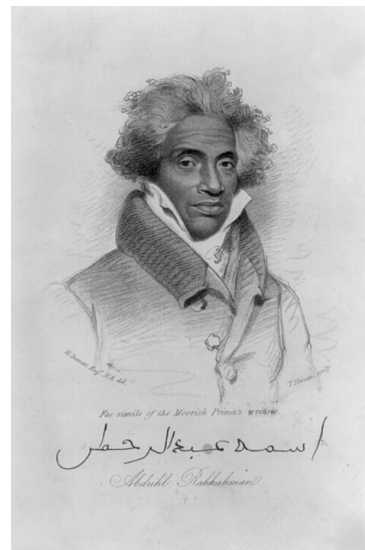
It is with great pleasure that we announce Center Church's formalized partnership with The Official Royal House of Sori.

We are honored to celebrate the life, legacy, story and journey of Prince Abdulrahman Ibrahima 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/>



Prince Abdulrahman
Ibrahima ibn Sori



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

www.centerchurchhartford.org

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



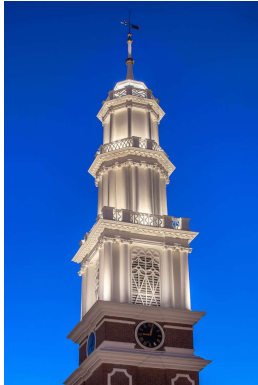
This Week's Celebrations!

Happy Birthday!

*December 12 ~ Clara Buck
December 13 ~ Anne Ostberg*

*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:*

*December 13 ~ In memory of parents, Rev. Adam and
Michelina Tangarone, by their children*

December 14 ~ In memory of Ernest L. Mitton

*December 15 ~ In memory of his father Melancthon W.
Jacobus by the late Melancthon Jacobus*

*December 15 ~ In loving memory of Agnes Santoorjian and
in celebration of her birthday by her family*

*December 15 ~ In loving memory of George H. Hernandez,
III by his family*

*December 16 ~ In memory of George B. Taylor, Jr. by his
son David*

*December 17 ~ In memory of Earline Duke on the
anniversary of her reception into membership in Center
Church by friends from the Adult Class*

*December 17 ~ In memory of Miss Ruth H. Hallborg by a
friend, the late Alice L. Hildebrand*

*December 17 ~ In loving memory of Scott Morse by his
grandparents,
the late Merle and the late Phil Keeler*

*December 17 ~ In memory of A. Philip Keeler, by his wife
the late Merle,
daughter Hope Keeler Morse, and son Phil Keeler, Jr.*

*December 17 ~ In loving memory on the birthday of our
dear friend and one of Center Church's most exemplary
members, the late Carolyn S. Arvidson,
by Joyce and Harold Buckingham*

*December 18 ~ In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Gaetano
Tangarone by their children*

*December 19 ~ In memory of Alice Lyon Hildebrand by her
friends*



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!

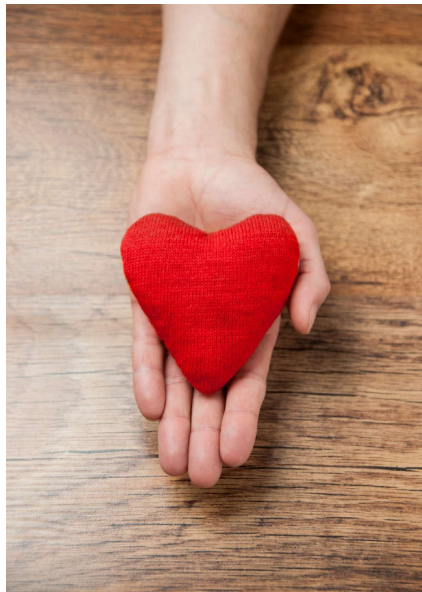
Click [HERE](#) to download information,
or send your inquiries to info@CCHartford.org,
or call Steven at the Church House,
860-249-5631 ext 200



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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