



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



**Order of Worship for  
January 18, 2026                            10:30 am**

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

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - JANUARY 18, 2026 – 10:30 AM

*Remembering The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Cover: Martin Luther King, Jr., 1960, by Jack Lewis Hiller*

\*Please rise in body or spirit.

CHIMES

PIANO PRELUDE Hymn to Freedom

O. Peterson

*David Reynolds, piano*

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT\*†

CALL TO WORSHIP

*Adapted from the Presbyterian Church (USA)*

One: Siblings in Christ, rejoice.

We live sustained by God's presence and love.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

As we mourn the wounds of God's children,

**God weeps with us**

As we give thanks for those who have lived in faith

**God gives thanks with us**

As we struggle for justice,

**God struggles with us.**

As we strive for peace,

**God strives with us**

As we work to build the Beloved Community,

**God works with us.**

As we offer our gifts to all,

**God blesses us.**

Siblings in Christ, rejoice.

**Sustained by God's presence and love we worship God.**

\*OPENING HYMN NCH 593 Lift Every Voice and Sing

LIFT EVERY VOICE

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

### A TIME FOR CHILDREN

*The congregation sings as the children head to their classrooms.*

Rev. Andrea Phillips

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHOIR We Shall Overcome

*Believed to be taken from an older hymn written by Charles Albert Tindley, We Shall Overcome is believed to have been first sung at a worker's protest in 1945 in Charleston, SC.<sup>1</sup> Popularized during the struggle for Civil Rights in the 1960s, We Shall Overcome was sung by over 50,000 attendees at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's funeral.<sup>2</sup> The version sung today was arranged and popularized by the American folk singer/songwriters Pete Seeger and Joan Baez.*

***We shall overcome,  
We shall overcome,  
We shall overcome, someday,  
Oh deep in my heart,  
I do believe,  
We shall overcome, someday.***

SCRIPTURE John 1: 29-42

SERMON

Rev. Liza Arulampalam

MUSICAL RESPONSE City Called Heaven

*Stewart Battle, soloist*

African American Spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Graham, David A. (14 April 2016). *"Who Owns 'We Shall Overcome'?"* The Atlantic. Retrieved 13 July 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Kotz, Nick (2005). *"14. Another Martyr"*. Judgment days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., and the laws that changed America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. p. 419. ISBN 0-618-08825-3.

POEM      *Yet We Wait*, by the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson  
*Inspired by Psalm 40: 1-11; From The Living Psalms Book.*

**All: Waiting grows old, God,**  
**we waited patiently for centuries**  
**waited across time and generations**  
**we are still waiting for you to incline your ear,**  
**for you to hear our cry, and respond to our tears.**

One: I am the voices of the people wailing for change  
I am the marchers in the street  
I am those who were lynched  
I am those who sit innocently in jail awaiting freedom  
I am the parents of dead bodies littering the streets.

**Waiting grows old God,**  
**our children grew old while we waited**  
**now their children grow old**  
**waiting to see your goodness in this land,**  
**in this land we live in.**

I carry their sighs and cries for generations  
I bring before you the pain of their living  
I wait to be pulled from the miry bog of grave injustices  
I want to set my feet where liberty lives  
I want to exist where my steps and my life are safe and secure.

**Waiting grows old God,**  
**40 years in the wildness**  
**400 years of enslavement**  
**40 acres and a mule promised**  
**4 years of HR 40 languishing in the US Congress**  
**while we wait for the affirmation of our worth through reparatory justice.**

I am waiting, waiting for emancipation to take hold  
I want to sing new songs of this elusive freedom  
I wait to sing songs of praise to God who delivers  
I want to trust in you, O God  
I wait to see the fear in those who insist I cannot be free.

**Waiting grows old God  
we are growing tired, our souls weary  
how long before you respond and show your delight  
in we – the people?  
in we – your children?  
in we – made in your image?**

I am the voices and cries of generations – past, present and future  
I am the people marching in the streets for ages  
I beg you God, do not withhold your mercy from me  
I beg you God, let your steadfast love and your faithfulness  
keep me safe as I await deliverance from this waiting.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

### CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Great Day

Martin V. Curtis

*Center Church Choir*

\*DOXOLOGY

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God the source of all our gifts,  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts,  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Lord of the Harvest, you give seed to the sower. Thank you for faithfully multiplying the works of our hands. Today we joyfully offer unto you the fruit of our labor as an act of worship. Receive our offering and guide us to use them for the transformation our communities. May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**  
**Amen**

\*CLOSING HYMN NCH 282 Every Time I Feel the Spirit

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BENEDICTION

*Thank you to everyone who participated in today's worship!*

*Please join us tomorrow at Faith Congregational Church, UCC, for their annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day service of remembrance and worship.*

MLK, Jr. Remembrance Service  
Monday, January 19, 2026 at 3 PM  
Faith Congregational Church  
2030 Main Street, Hartford