



center church
the first church of christ UCC

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



E-NEWS

Feb. 6, 2026

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

This Week in Worship - Sunday, Feb. 8

Join us at 10:30 AM - 675

Main Street



Worship with us this Week!

Sunday, Feb. 1, at 10:30 AM,
In Person & Online

Blessings, Center Church!

Happy Wednesday Center Church!

We have God's blessing to be SALTY, especially in a cold, ice-y world. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus says,

"You are the salt of the earth."

Not become salt, but you already are salt. The mandate is, "be what you are, be who you are called to be."

The thing about salt is that it only takes a little bit to make a big difference - a sprinkle on a chocolate chip cookie, for example, makes something wonderful absolutely sublime.

We are called to do what we can, in whatever way we can, for nothing is too small. In fact, it might be the littlest bit that makes all the difference.

Stay SALTY, beloved.

~The Worship Team

A Special Message from Outreach Director Carrie Howe



We continue to operate extended hours as we are in Cold Weather Protocol until the freezing cold temperatures break. This means we will continue to have shelter staff and guests at 60 Gold Street beyond the overnight hours. If you know of or encounter someone who needs a safe place to stay during this timeframe, please share this information with them.

As members of the congregation you can support us to keep our guests fed. If you (or more than one of you) are able and willing to prepare food or help us to provide food that would be greatly appreciated.

Some foods that are easily prepared and shared include chilis, pasta dishes and sandwiches. For more information, about how you can help please reach out to Carrie Howe directly, either by email or by phone.

Carrie Howe
Outreach Director

office: 860.249.5631 ext. 205
cell: 860.778.1210

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, caretteam@cchartford.org.

The friends, family and community of Alex Pretti and Renee Nicole Good, victims of and those affected by violence; migrant workers and immigrants; Jane and Jim Macomber and their family; Lani Ralston; Edward and Margaret Ralston; John Conley, Jr.; Gilberto Mercado and family; Sally Wagan and family; Ephraim Adams and Nancy J. Adams; 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, Anita Hawkins,...

From Center Church Camp Asto Wamah: Registration Begins Sunday, Feb. 1!

Hi, Center Church Families,

This is a reminder that registration for Center Church Camp Asto Wamah begins on Sunday, February 1st at 8:00 am!

Please ensure that you sign up your children on or around that date to get a spot for the summer! Children who are registered for Church School attend camp for free!

If you would like to pre-register, you can email Chris and Catherine at campastowamahCT@gmail.com. They will register Center Church kids before February 1st.

Thank you!

Remember the
Other Fellow

Celebrating Our 117th Season!

Center Church Camp Asto Wamah



Columbia, Connecticut
www.campastowamah.org

Founded in 1910

Camp Asto Wamah is a non-sectarian residential summer camp open to children ages 8 through 14. Camp Asto Wamah does not discriminate for reasons of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Chris Maclean will continue to serve as the camp director. He is employed as a school counselor in Connecticut public schools and has been the camp director for many years.

Remember the
Other Fellow



There will be 3 two-week sessions.
The coed session is the only one-week session.

June 28 to July 4 coed, ages 8 to 12
July 5 to July 18 all boys, ages 8 to 14
July 19 to August 1 all girls, ages 8 to 14
August 2 to August 15 all girls, ages 8 to 14

The 2026 registration fee of \$50 is due at the time of registration and is not refundable or deductible from the camp fee of \$750 per week.



Online registration opens at 8:00 am on Sunday, February 1st, 2026!



For further information:
Call (203) 631-0167 or
email campastowamahCT@gmail.com



Center Church Camp Asto Wamah is
licensed by the State of Connecticut
and accredited by the American Camp
Association.

From the Property Subcommittee *Winter Updates*

Warm Greetings Center Church,

For the last few months a small group has been meeting together to discuss a plan for addressing the more pressing structural issues related to our two historic properties.

A short but incomplete list we're looking at includes:

- Repairs and Maintenance to the Slate Roof
- Structural and Cosmetic Repairs to the Meetinghouse Roofline
- Drainage and Masonry Repair and Preservation at both properties
- Structural and Cosmetic Repairs to the main entrance of 60 Gold Street
- Water Damage to the south facade, basement ceiling and underground walls of 60 Gold Street

We have completed a survey of the damage with the help of architect Tim Brewer to identify potential Project Managers. We have also begun drafting a Request for Proposal and Qualifications (RFP/Q) to send out to these would-be contractors.

We expect to meet with engineers soon, who can advise and inform us as we move forward. As we move along on the process we will continue to keep the congregation updated. We are currently using Capital Improvement Funds to finance the preliminary stages of our project but as more information becomes available about the full scope and cost of the project, we anticipate fundraising efforts that include grant writing, outside donations and a thorough exploration of other revenue streams.

If you have any interest in joining the Property Subcommittee Working Group, please contact David Maclean or Larry Roeming.

In Faith,

The Property Subcommittee
*David Maclean, Larry Roeming,
Andrea Olson & Steven Lewis*

Come and Dance! ***Gospel House Music Event*** **Feb. 15 at 3 PM**

GOSPEL HOUSE MUSIC

ALL ARE WELCOME ■ MUSIC + DANCE + COMMUNITY

**soul selektah project
ft. dj soul selektah**



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2026
3:00PM - 6:00PM
CENTER CHURCH
60 GOLD STREET

Presented by the Soul Selektah Project
and NxtThrsdy Productions. Inquiries and
Bookings: soulselektahproject@gmail.com

Writer and social commentator, Dan Savage, in talking about the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 90s writes that, "we buried our friends in the morning, we protested in the afternoon, and we danced all night, and it was the dance that kept us in the fight because it was the dance we were fighting for." In times like these, we need dancing more than ever.

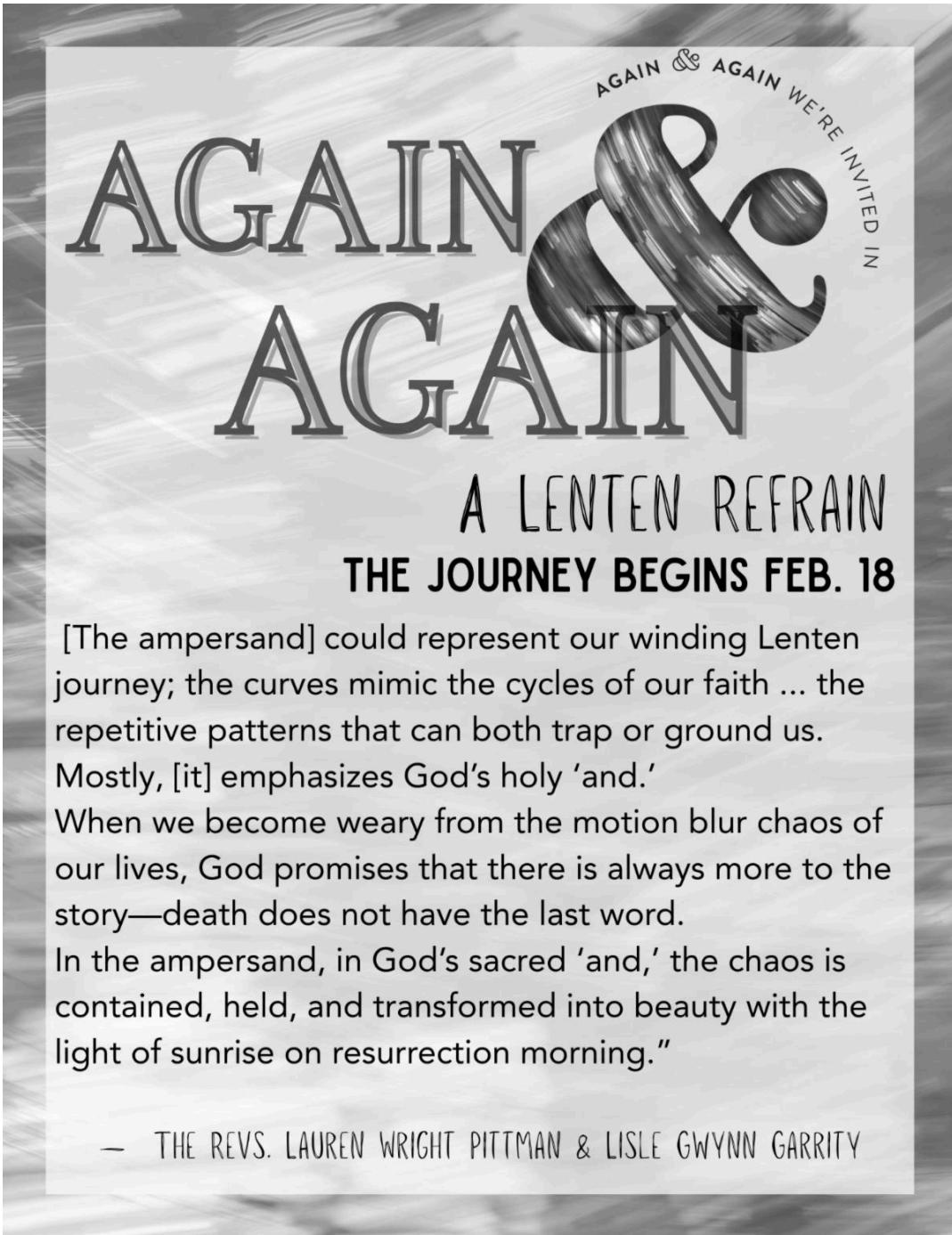
Join Center Church, on Feb. 15th as we dance, praise and celebrate that all people are God's Beloved and that is Good News.

DJ Soul Selektah will be spinning the beats at this Nxt Thrsdy production; you don't want to miss it!

This is a offering for the community, for our community. But, if you feel compelled to give in your appreciation please bring anything from the list below, to support our Winter Shelter Mission:

- * Laundry Detergent
- * Non-Perishable Food Items
- * Gently-used or new winter hats, gloves or warm socks

***Ash Wednesday and the start of
the season of Lent, is Feb 18.
Ash Sunday will be Feb. 22.***



From Our Friends at PFLAG Granby



Our friends at **#pflaggranby** have recently established themselves (Congrats!) and to celebrate they've launched "Becomings: The Portrait Project."

Original oil paintings of transgender and non-binary individuals, paired with their stories in their own words, will be exhibited throughout New England in order to promote positive community awareness before being returned to the portrait participants.

If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested in participating, connect with PFLAG Granby via email or facebook.

fb: [PFLAGGranby](https://www.facebook.com/PFLAGGranby)
email: PFLAGGranby@gmail.com
website: granby.pflag.org

**From Outreach:
New Office Hours
*by Appointment Only***



THE CENTER ANGEL @ LEWIS & GOLD

Winter Open Hours by appointment only.

Reach out for assistance with

**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 Winter 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 group met

and made budgetary recommendations for how to best fund our growing Faith Formation Ministries.

- 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. The group continues to meet regularly and hopes to make a presentation to the congregation on their findings and recommendations at the Annual Meeting in March.

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.



Film will be followed by a ZOOM Discussion with the filmmaker Tara Moore

This film is an important reminder that oppression can happen if we turn a blind eye to its presence. From the onset of settler colonialism to the institutionalization of the Apartheid system, to the struggle for liberation in 1994, and finally to the current state of politics and class in the post-Apartheid world, Legacy offers an eye-opening and unapologetic look at the historical dynamics of this culture. Filmmaker Tara Moore offers complex depictions that shift our understanding of the scope and scale of Apartheid as an ideology and tool of social control.

Title of Film:

Date of Showing:

Place of Showing:

Legacy: The Decolonized History of South Africa

Saturday February 21, 2026 Time: 6:00pm

The Universalist Church of West Hartford

433 Fern Street West Hartford, CT 06107

Hands on Hartford

Please bring a jar of jam or jelly
for Hands on Hartford

Serving Hartford's most vulnerable residents. Food access programs, homeless outreach and prevention services, permanent supportive housing, and health support initiatives improve the well-being of individuals and families in need, helping to foster a stronger, healthier community.

Sponsors: *The event and movie are free but donations at the event for the filmmaker Tara Moore will help keep her meaningful outreach and educational efforts alive.*



**Save the dates for for our first book study of the new year:
January 15 & 29, February 12 & 26. The sessions will take place online, on Zoom, from 7 PM to 8:30 PM.**

Participants are responsible for purchasing their own copies of the book. You can use the QR Code on the poster below to sign up or you can sign up using the link below.

[Book Study Sign-Up Link](#)



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the first church of christ UCC

JOIN CENTER CHURCH FOR THIS BOOK STUDY

WINTER 2026

ALL BOOK STUDIES TAKE PLACE ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?

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

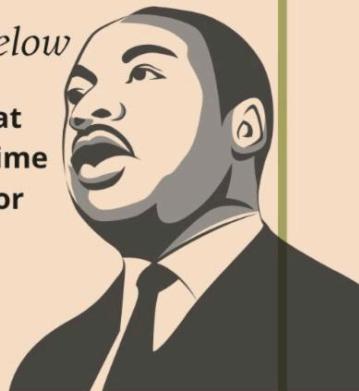
In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., isolated himself from the demands of the civil rights movement, rented a house in Jamaica with no telephone, and labored over his final manuscript. In this significantly prophetic work, which has been unavailable for more than ten years, we find King's acute analysis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

JAN 15, 29 & FEB 12, 26

Sign up using the QR Code Below



Discussions will take place at two week intervals to allow time for reading and to prepare for (what we hope will be) robust conversation & engagement with Dr. King's writing.



Greater Hartford
— Interfaith —
Action Alliance

GHIAA Winter Updates

We have three action updates to share with you this week.

1. Progress on the Federal Response Fund

Last fall, legislators set aside \$500 million to respond to loss of federal funding for certain human services and safety net programs. Gov. Lamont has spent less than 40% of the money, and with time running out before the Feb. 4 deadline, GHIAA sent an [open letter](#) to the governor urging him to act on behalf of our communities. Today, leadership [announced a plan](#) to carry forward the balance of the fund for use this spring. This gives us and our many allies in this fight an opportunity to continue to keep up the pressure for meaningful state investment in human needs and for reform of the regressive policies that prevent it.

2. Protections against National Guard Deployment

- With the horrors occurring in Minnesota, Maine, and other places etched in our minds, it is urgent that our state take proactive measures to protect CT from federal overreach. One step we can take now is an executive order to place limits on the use of the National Guard for immigration enforcement purposes. **What you can do:**[Read the letter](#) sent in December by 45 organizations, including GHIAA, urging the governor to take action
- [Watch this webinar](#) recorded earlier this week to learn more about this issue
- [Use this action alert](#) from ACLU-CT to make your voice heard

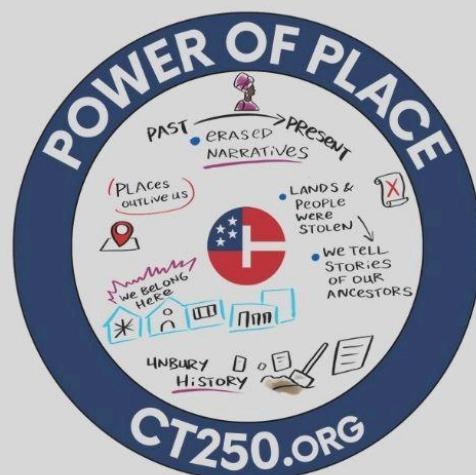
3. Immigrant Solidarity Prayer Vigil

In response to ICE's activities in Minneapolis and across the country—arresting, detaining, harming, and sometimes killing both documented and undocumented individuals and citizens alike, creating an atmosphere of danger and terror—greater Hartford clergy and laypeople are invited to gather on **Friday, February 6, at 11:00 am, in front of the Federal Building at 450 Main Street in Hartford**. We will hold a vigil, praying for a return to sanity, to compassion, to decency, to the respect for the rights and freedoms granted by our Constitution and for the rule of law, to the values that make our country truly great. Clergy of all faiths are invited to attend and offer brief prayers at this peaceful demonstration of the power of kindness over violence, of unity over division, of faith over cynicism, of love over hate. For further information, please contact Rev. Josh Pawelek at minister@uuse.org or Rabbi Donna Berman at donnab@charteroakcenter.org.

Thank you for your faithfulness in the fight for justice.

Peace,
Jocelyn and the GHIAA Team

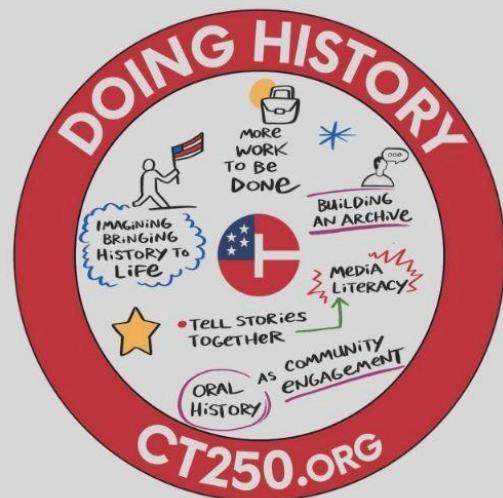
From the Center Church History Team



center church
the first church of christ UCC
THE TEACHERS' LIBRARY
AT CENTER CHURCH, HARTFORD, CT

AMERICA 250 AFFILIATE

CONNECTICUT



Center Church's History Team is seeking members and community partners who are excited by the long history of Center Church and who are interested in connecting to our community near and far through that history.

To name a few of the local partners with whom we're currently working - Trinity College, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center for Literary Activism, The Mark Twain House and Museum, Opera CT, Liberty Christian Center International, The Slater Museum in Norwich and of course, the Official Royal House of Sori.

We're also currently exploring partnerships with the Congregational Library and Archives in Boston, MA, Warburton Community Congregational Church in Hartford, CT, and Temple University.

In the coming months, the History Team will be finalizing its programming for Hartford's celebration of America's 250th Birthday. Center Church and the Teacher's Library are America 250 CT, working closely with the City's ad hoc commission as well as with the Statewide commission and are very excited to be a part of this inventive and expansive definition of what America is and can be for the

next 250 years. Watch this space for more information about America 250 CT - Hartford.

If making connections within Hartford and abroad and learning about our deep history speak to you, please do not hesitate to reach out the either [Andre Keitt](#), chair of the History Team, or [Brother Eric Hearst](#).



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.



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

@centerchurchhartford@

facebook.com/centerchurchhartford

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



This Week's Celebrations!

Happy Birthday!

February 6 ~ Mark Fisher

February 7 ~ Claire Woodbridge MacKenzie

February 9 ~ Graeme MacKenzie

***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:

February 1 ~ In memory of her father and mother, by the late Miss Mary Starr Rawlins

February 1 ~ In loving memory of Ruth Peterson Hansen, by her husband, the late Howard F. Hansen

February 2 ~ In loving memory of Jeannette Nakos, by her brother, the late Leroy W. Kopp

February 2 ~ In memory of Alfred Burger, Jr., our dear friend, by Jeanne and the late Harold Holcombe, Uncle Al, our Godfather, from Jean, Michele, Tom, Joshua, Jeremy, Heidi, Matthew, Nick, Alexis and Ryan

February 3 ~ In memory of Albert F. Gilde and in honor of Dorothy F. Gilde, by the Late Helen M. Gilde

February 3 ~ In memory of our dear friend, Jeanne Frances Schoen, by the late Joyce and Harold Buckingham

February 4 ~ In memory of Mrs. Norma Allen Haine, by the late William Haine

February 4 ~ In loving tribute to a dear uncle, John Arthur Taylor, by his niece, Patricia W. Anderson

February 5 ~ A friend in need, is a friend indeed ~ In memory of Ling Sieng Guong, nurse, West Malaysia - died December 5, 1984, by the late Janet Chen

February 6 ~ In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Hohlfeld, by their son, the late J. Maurice Hohlfeld

February 7 ~In memory of Margaret A. Doyle, who became a member of Center Church women on this date in 1897, by Center Church Womens' Workshop

February 8 ~ In memory of Maude Meacham, by her fellow employees of Lord and Taylor

February 8 ~ In loving memory of my beloved Ruth, by her husband, the late Ellis Hamilton

February 8 ~ In loving memory of Donald V. Bohman, by his wife Marie and family

February 8 ~ In memory of my mother, Betty Gene Harden.

With love from your daughter, Valerie Thaxter-Grant

February 9 ~ In loving memory of my oldest sister, Amy Wei-Jia Chen Chung and brother-in-law, Choon-Hoon Chung, Kuiten, Fujian, China, by the late Janet Wei-Kuang Chen

February 10 ~ In loving memory of Lorinda Brown Esten,

by her children and grandchildren and late husband, R. Stewart Esten

February 11 ~ In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Taft, by Robert M. Taft

February 11 ~ In honor of The Reverend Paul Bobbitt,

whose light shines far beyond that of the steeple

February 12 ~ In loving memory of Winifred Church Swift, by her daughter



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 Resource Team:

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

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:



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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