



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



Order of Worship for

March 1, 2026 10:30 am

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

ORDER OF WORSHIP – SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT
AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE CALLED TO LISTEN
MARCH 1, 2026 – COMMUNION SUNDAY
Cover Art: “Invited In,” by Lauren Wright Pittman

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

ORGAN PRELUDE I Call to You, Lord Jesus Christ

J. S. Bach

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*†

KINESTHETIC CALL TO WORSHIP

We invite you to find a comfortable posture where you can open your body, mind and spirit to what the Still-Speaking God is saying to you today while the worship leader reads our call to worship.

*OPENING NCH 193 In the Cross of Christ I Glory

RATHBURN

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

Rev. Dr. Eric Hearst

The congregation sings as the children head to their classrooms.

***Praise God, praise God, all you little children,
God is Love, God is Love;
Praise God, praise God, all you little children,
God is Love, God is Love!***

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Creator God,

We cannot hear the trees growing—seeds pushing up through the dirt into the sun.

And we cannot hear a single drop of rain, missing one in the many.

We cannot hear the weight of people's grief, a burden that so often is silent.

And we cannot hear when hearts are changed, but you can.

You hear it all.

So once again, we come to you with bowed heads and hopeful hearts,

Asking that you would lend us your ears.

Help us to hear as you hear so that we can live as you lived.

We are listening.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE Psalm 22:23 -31 (OT)
Mark 8:31 - 9-8 (NT)

SERMON Let's Begin Again: Learning, Listening, and Rising Anew
from Life's Failures and Mistakes

Rev. Dr. Eric Hearst

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

All: We believe.

One: Sometimes our belief is confident,
Like a child on a dance floor—
Unashamed and wildly genuine.
We believe.

**All: Sometimes our belief is distant,
Flickering and calling out to us
Like a lighthouse on the sea.
We believe.**

One: Sometimes our belief shows up as passion,
Guiding the way we vote, shop, give, live, trust, and hope.
We believe.

**All: Sometimes our belief is like a shadow—
Faith stitched to our heels, unmoveable, unloseable,
A gift for winding journeys.
We believe.**

One: Sometimes our belief exists like growing pains.
We step forward. We fall back.
But again and again,
Jesus invites us to listen,
To grow, and to take another step.

**All: So again and again,
We speak these truths out loud:
We believe.**

One: We believe.

All: Again and again, we believe.

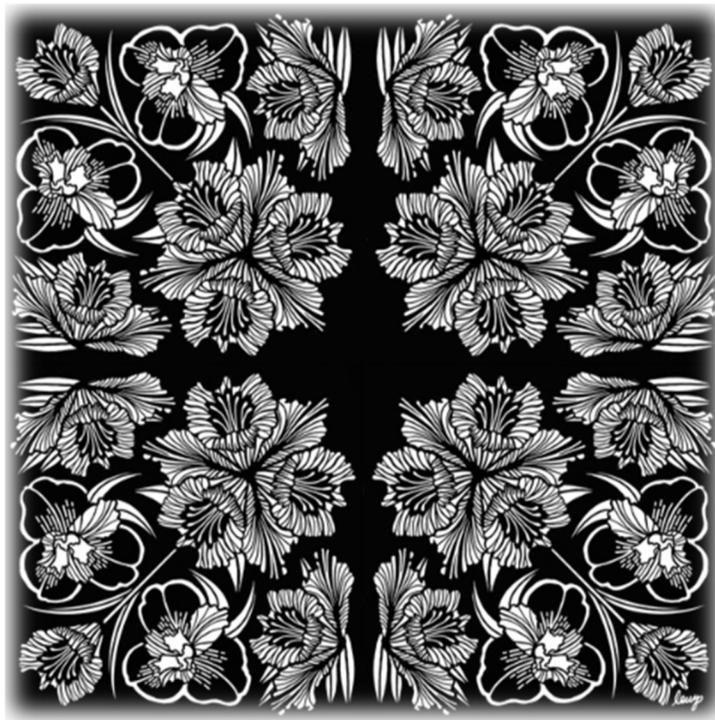
One: Thanks be to God.

All: Amen.

*COMMUNION ANTHEM *How Beautiful*

T. Paris

Center Church Choir



*The Cross Remains by Lauren Wright Pittman
(Based on 1 Corinthians 1:18-31)*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Listening God,

**All: Take what is closed in us and open it.
Take what is distracted in us and settle it.
Take what is hurting in us and hold it.**

**Take any and all parts of us that create distance from you.
For we are like Peter, O God.
We argue what we don't know. We fear what we cannot see.
And we almost always speak sooner than we listen.**

**So open us, settle us, hold us, and forgive us.
We long to hear you more clearly.
We long to know you more fully.**

**With hope we pray,
And with gratitude we confess.
Amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Siblings in Christ,
We confess with gratitude because we know that
 God already has heard and forgiven us.
No matter what we have done or left undone, we are held in God's hand.
So rest in this good news:

**All: God invites us in.
God meets us where we are.
God hears our prayers.
God forgives us.**

One: Thanks be to God for a love like that.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Words of Institution

Invitation to the Table

In Luke's Gospel we read that Jesus, at the table with two of the disciples, took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, and 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 to prayers.

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

Breaking the Bread & Pouring the Cup

Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ.

Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives.

Sharing the Elements

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving & 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...

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Steal Away to Jesus

J. Rosamond Johnson

Elizabeth Lyra Ross-Norman, Soprano

Steal away, steal away,

Steal away to Jesus!

Steal away, steal away home.

I ain't got long to stay here.

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDRETH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise God, all creatures here below,

Praise God, above you heavenly host,

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*Unison*)

You walked the way of the cross freely, and you call us to follow. Receive these offerings as acts of faith in your kingdom. May they carry your good news forward, so that generations yet to come will know your name and proclaim your faithfulness.

Form in us the posture of the cross — self-giving, trusting, hopeful — as we dedicate these gifts and ourselves to you, the Suffering Servant and Risen Lord.

Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NCH 204 “Take Up Your Cross,” the Savoir Said

DEUS TUORUM MILITUM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen

CHORAL BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE Toccata in E Minor

J. S. Bach

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