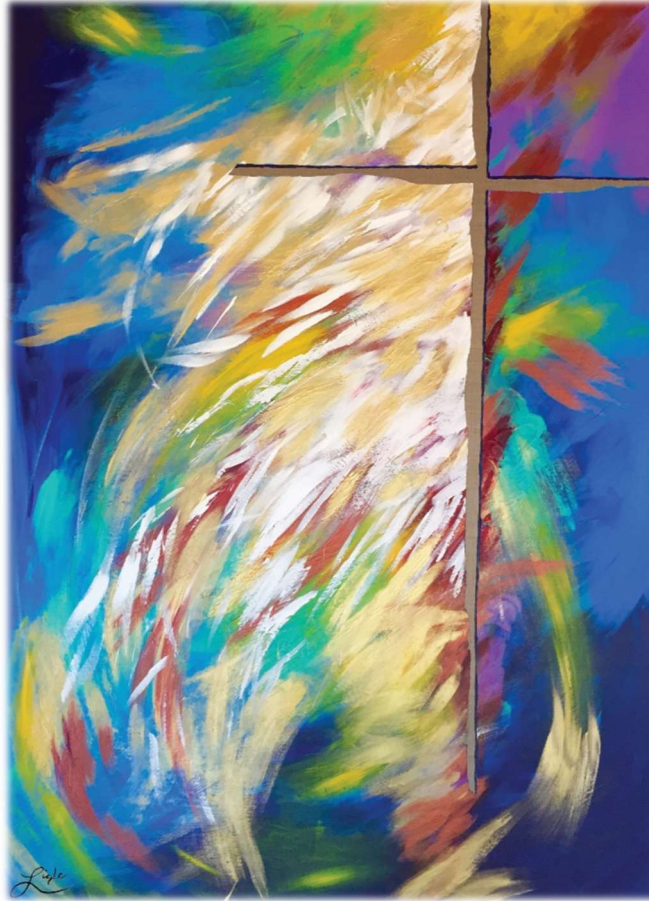




*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ*



**Order of Worship for
April 5, 2026 10:30 am**

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

LIGHT

by Rev. Sarah Are

In Italian, the phrase, “to give birth”
Literally means, “to bring into the light.”
A mother will labor for hours and days,
Breaking herself for you,
Whispering between fractured breaths,
“This is my body, broken for you.”

A mother will do this as long as it takes
So that you, her beloved,
Have a chance at life.
So that you, her beloved,
Can feel the warmth of the light.

And after all that pain,
The sun will rise.
The doctor will put a baby on her chest.
The mother will hold her child as if
Letting go is indeed physically impossible.
She will breathe easy,
And then she will whisper softly,
“All this time,
All these deep breaths...
It was love, again and again and again.”

It is childbirth,
But it is also resurrection.
A body broken.
Breath fractured.
A long night.
A sunrise.
Breath returned.
New life,
And a love that won't let go.

Friends, maybe Easter is just God whispering,
“All this time,
All these deep breaths...
It's been love, again and again and again.”

I think we've been standing in the light all this time.
Now that I think of it, isn't it warm?

RESURRECTION SUNDAY – EASTER MORNING

AGAIN & AGAIN, THE SUN RISES

APRIL 5, 2026 – ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

PRELUDE Rondeau

J. J. Mouret

*William Valenti & Eric Tunkel, trumpet
Christopher Latournes, timpani*

CHORAL INTROIT Even So in Christ, Shall All be Made Alive
(From *Messiah*)

G. F. Handel

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*†

EASTER ACCLAMATION

One: The grave is empty.

All: He is risen!

One: He is risen!

All: He is risen indeed!

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: This day is like every other day.

**All: Alarm clocks beeped. Covers were removed.
Coffee was brewed. Weary bodies came to life.**

One: And yet this day, is like no other day –

**All: For the sun rose, and we knew it was a miracle.
The tomb was empty, and they knew it was love.**

One: So, again and again we say –

**All: The longest night is over.
Death has lost its sting.
Jesus is among us.**

Alleluia! Amen.

One: Again and again and again –

All: Alleluia! Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Receiving the Sacrament of Baptism today are:

*Matthew Allen Marks
Lillian Catherine Marks
Lincoln Christopher Marks*

Welcome & Address

Questions of the Candidates

**Congregational Assent (Please Rise in Body or Spirit)*

Pastor: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support and care to the ones about to be baptized as they live and grow in Christ?

People: **We promise our love, support and care.**

Act of Baptism

Baptismal Prayer



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Joining Center Church this morning are:

*Nealie Newberger
Matthew Marks
Norman McFarlane
Keary Pitt*

*Guerline Pierre
Eliene Ferreira
Sean Sellers*

Invitation

Questions of the Candidates

**Question of the Congregation (Please Rise in Body or Spirit)*

Moderator: Do you promise to support these new members as they journey in faith with you today, and in the days ahead?

People: **We do, with the help of God.**

Welcome and Reception

Pastor: Let us, the members of The First Church of Christ in Hartford, Center Church, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: **We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our Risen Savior.**

Moderator: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of Center Church of Hartford, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church. Go in the peace of Christ.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

The congregation sings as the children head to their classrooms.

Ms. Ebony McMillan

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Hallelujah (Praise Ye the Lord!)

*Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord!
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord!
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah,
Praise ye the Lord!*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

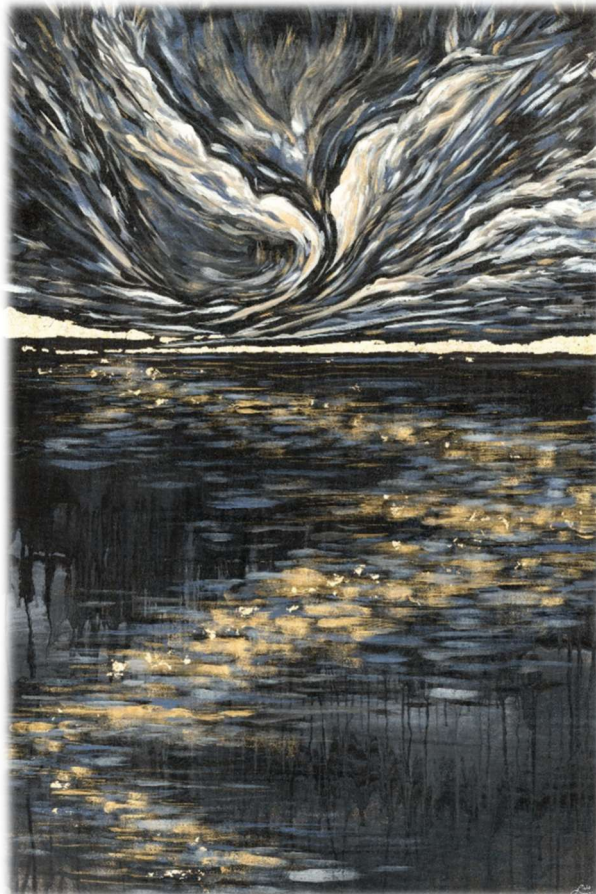
SCRIPTURE

Mark 16:1-8

SERMON

Again and Again, the Sun Rises

Rev. Liza Arulampalam



MUSICAL RESPONSE

Hosanna

Hillsong

Center Church Worship Band

CALL TO CONFESSION

RITUAL OF CONFESSION (*Responsive*)

One: Beloved Community, before God and before you, my family, I confess:

I have seen the sun rise and withheld my praise.

I have seen my neighbor suffer and withheld my aid.

I have seen love extended and chosen to walk away.

I have seen divisions deepen and managed to remain unfazed.

All: We hear you. We see you. You are forgiven.

God's love is like the sun.

No matter how lost we are in the night,

Day after day, the light will find you.

Rest easy. You are held in God's warmth.

One: Thanks be to God. Amen.

All: Now we must pray.

Beloved friend, before God and before each other, we confess:

We have seen the sun rise and withheld our praise.

We have seen our neighbors suffer and have withheld our aid.

We have seen love extended and chosen to walk away.

We have seen divisions deepen and managed to remain unfazed.

One: I hear you. I see you. You are forgiven.

God's love is like the sun.

No matter how lost we are in the night,

Day after day, the light will find you.

Rest easy. You are held in God's warmth.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Great Thanksgiving

Sanctus NCH 793

The musical score is written for a choir in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble and bass staff with lyrics underneath. The second system also has a treble and bass staff with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: C, G7, C, F, C in the first system; F, C, Am, F, G7, C in the second system.

¡San - to, san - to, san - to, mi cor - a - zón te a - do - ra! Mi
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you! My

cor - a - zón te sa - be de - cir: san - to e - res Dios.
heart is glad to say the words: you are ho - ly, God.

Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

Music for Communion Hallelujah, Amen! (from *Judas Maccabeus*)
Center Church Choir

G. F. Handel

Sharing of the Elements

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Unison*)

**We know the fear of the upper room.
We know the feeling of hard days and long nights.
We know the grief of the tomb,
And the particular ache of saying goodbye.
We know the pain of Good Friday,
And we know the darkness before dawn.
And still,
And still,
We believe.
We believe that again and again,
The sun will rise.
Again and again,
God will draw near.
Again and again,
We will march toward justice.
Again and again,
The tomb will be empty.
Again and again,
Love will win.
Again and again,
God will lead the church.
Again and again,
And again and again,
We will be loved.
The journey will not be perfect.
We will need to rise before dawn.
We will need angels along the way.
But again and again,
The sun will rise.
We believe. Amen.**

