



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



Order of Worship for
May 3, 2026 10:30 am

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

FIFTH SUNDAY IN EASTER
GOSPEL IN GLASS, WEEK 3 – THE COGSWELL MEMORIAL WINDOW
MAY 3, 2026 – ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

ORGAN PRELUDE *Elegy*

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)
arr. by Lani Smith

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*†

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We gather before the God who heals – the One who declares:
"I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal."

Many: **We come with our doubts and our faith, our wounds and our hope.**

One: Like the father who brought his suffering child to Jesus, we cry out:
"If you are able, have pity on us and help us!"

Many: ***"I believe; help my unbelief!"***

One: Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him up.
This is the God we worship – the One who raises the fallen and heals the broken.

All: **Restore us, O God. Receive our praise and our prayers.
By your grace, make us whole. Amen.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*HYMN NCH 243 Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

WEISSE FLAGGEN

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst

The congregation sings as the children head to their classrooms.

“Welcome”

M. Miller & L. Zelman

Singing welcome, welcome to this place.

You're invited to come and know God's grace.

All are welcome, the love of God to share

'cause all of us are welcome here,

all are welcome in this place.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

*Lord God, as we turn now to your holy Word, send your Holy Spirit upon us –
that our minds may be opened to understand,*

our hearts prepared to receive,

and our lives shaped by what we hear.

*Let these scriptures be not merely words on a page,
but a living word that speaks to us today.*

To your glory alone we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Jeremiah 30: 17

Mark 9: 14 - 29

SERMON *Fully Accepted and Fully Affirmed: How God in Christ Jesus Pulls People
from the Margins to the Mainstream*

The Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

All: We believe.

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

One: We believe.

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

All: We believe.

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

One: We believe.

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

All: 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.

*HYMN NCH 242 The Strife is O'er

VICTORY

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

One: 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 of Bread and Pouring of Wine

Sharing of the Elements

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and 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 In His Hands
 Emily Gillespie, Soloist

M. Bonds

*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!*

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Lord, you have promised to heal our wounds and restore what is broken. Receive these offerings and use them to extend that same restoring grace to others. In the healing name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NCH 253 Yours is the Glory

JUDAS MACCABEUS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Glorious Faith in God

Rachel Sawyer

Thank you to everyone who participated in worship today, Go in Peace!

*A special thank you to our guest organist, Norman McFarlane,
for sharing his musical gifts this morning!*