



First Congregational UCC

Mapping Your Life

**Thursdays - January 14, 21, 28, and February 4
at 6:30 p.m.**



2020 was a year of constant change that caused us to cancel our plans and re-orient our lives. We learned new terms, such as "social distancing." We may feel as if new seeds have been planted in the soil of our souls. How do we live our lives knowing how **quickly** things can change and how much is beyond our control? You are invited to a time of reflection on who/where you

are. We will have space to reflect on your relationships and how to inhabit this world in such a time as this.

We will gather on **Zoom** at **6:30 p.m.** on the dates above to discuss, listen, and learn. This will be a wonderful chance for discussion and discernment. **Sign up today by emailing Pastor Wes.**

Worship on Sunday mornings:

We continue to **worship outdoors around the labyrinth at 9 a.m.** each Sunday. We continue to Livestream on Facebook and our church's website at **10:55 a.m. each Sunday.**

January 3 ~ Focus passage is Luke 2:41-52. On the first Sunday of 2021, we will gather with prayers for the coming months, weeks, and days. We will celebrate Holy Communion.

January 10 ~ Focus passage is Luke 3:15-22. We will celebrate the Baptism of Jesus and the ways God's love claims each of us as beloved.

January 17 ~ **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Sunday!** Focus passage is Luke 4:14-30.

January 24 ~ **Annual Meeting** Focus passage is Luke 5:1-11 focusing on our call to be disciples in these days.

January 31 ~ Focus passage is Luke 6:17-30. We will hear Jesus' sermon preached on a plain to round out the first month of a new year.

With great love to you all ~ Wes

January Hours

Pastor Wes:

Mon.-Thurs.: 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Bobbi:

Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Mark:

Mon. - Fri.: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Greg:

Tues. - Fri.: various hours

Annual Meeting

This is the call to the Annual Meeting of First Congregational UCC, Sarasota, FL, to be held on **January 24, 2021, at noon via Zoom.**

Items to be voted upon:

- ✓ Financial reports 2020
- ✓ Budget 2021
- ✓ Nominating Report 2021
- ✓ Creation Justice

Celebrate all the ways we have shared God's love this year!!

Annual Report will be on the website on January 10, 2021. Paper copy, please contact the office.

For the zoom link, please email Pastor Wes.

Oasis for the Soul Opportunities

The Oasis Center for Reflection and Renewal Mission:
Become a source of spiritual nourishment, renewal, reflection, inspiration, encouragement, and healing.



Four Amazing Opportunities in January

- ❖ **Grief Group** will continue to meet on Zoom every **Tuesday** at **1 p.m.** We welcome anyone who needs a safe space to process the heaviness of our hearts as we mourn the passing of those we love.
- ❖ **Mapping YOUR Life:** *Please see page 1 for more information.*
- ❖ **Sacred Conversations on Race: Wednesdays at 3 p.m.** on Zoom
- ❖ **Thursday Service: 1 p.m.** on Facebook Live

Peace and Justice

The Peace and Justice Network invites you to be a part of its email network to receive news of events and of ways to make our voices heard by petitioning our legislators and officials for justice ministry causes currently in our focus. If you want to be "in the know," contact:

Sara: sarajlittle@me.com or
Barbara: barbarashaver@me.com

Peace and Justice Events and News

SURE Initiatives:

Criminal Justice: State's Attorney Ed Brodsky has agreed to work toward juvenile and adult citation programs. We're going to be meeting with the Polk County States Attorney because Polk has an 85% usage rate and some strategies we'd like to follow to improve our program. On December 8 there was a state-wide Criminal Justice Collaborative Meeting to serve as an "orientation" to state-wide efforts to create a more just criminal justice system in Florida.

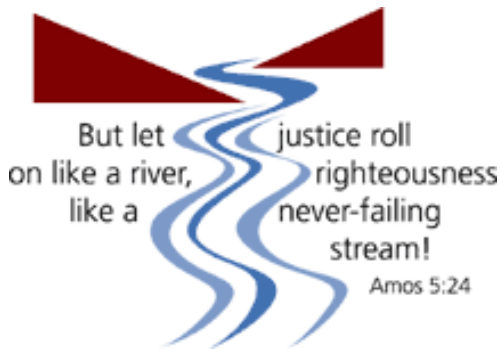
Affordable Housing: The new Mayor of Sarasota and Commissioner's general committee meetings are scheduled at **6 p.m., Thursday - January 28 and February 25.** Our network members are invited if they are interested in this work of housing for our community workers.

DART National Action Workshop: **January 14, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.** SURE is part of DART, its National organization. More information will be forthcoming from SURE.

Join the Zoom Conversation

- **Sunday Coffee Hour at Noon ~** You are **always welcome** to join in the conversation and connect with other members!
- **COLLAGE Tuesdays @ 11 a.m. ~** Collage is our LGBTQ and Ally Group. All are welcome to join our Collage group on Zoom for support and faithful discussions.
- **Tuesday Bible Study @ 6:30 p.m. ~** We meet on Zoom to discuss the Bible passage for the upcoming Sunday.
- **Wednesday Bible Study @ 11 a.m. ~** We meet on Zoom to discuss the Bible passage for the upcoming Sunday.
- **Tuesday Book Club @ 1 p.m., January 19 ~** Migrations by Charlotte McConaghy. Contact Nancy at fnmcelroy@gmail.com for more information.

Peace and Justice Events and News, cont.



Brady: The End Family Fire (EFF) initiative is a program of education and dialogue around responsible gun ownership to prevent gun violence in homes. The EFF initiative is continuing.

Community Meals: Help us celebrate our 3rd Anniversary of providing a monthly community meal at St. Paul Lutheran Church. We need your home-baked cookies, and, if you are able, we could use your help in preparing our take-out meal. Please join us on **January 26 from 4 – 6 p.m.** Volunteer and/or inquire for more details--Carol Hagglund at carolhagglund@gmail.com.

Racial Justice: Sacred Conversations on Race occur each **Wednesday at 3 p.m. on Zoom.** Call Rev. Bixby for the link. All are welcome to join in our conversations. No word has been received from the school board on the resource book we gave it (*The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys*), but our tracking notice says it was delivered. We hope the book will be given as suggested to the person who is to be appointed to oversee cultural equity in our schools.

Project 180: Our apologies to Pamela Gore-Meade, the newly appointed board chair, for indicating Project 180 was also known as "Second Chance". We warmly welcome Project 180, which has joined SURE on our church campus—each on opposite ends of the old Education Building.

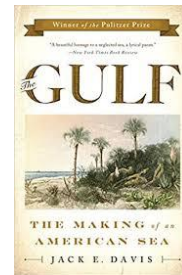
Project 180 has opened a second residential house for qualified, recently incarcerated men. Like "Nick's House," this house will offer assistance and job training toward successful reintegration into our community, which reduces recidivism. In Spring 2021, an educational series around the intersectionality of incarceration and trauma is planned. More details to come.

Church Council: Council has been researching and discussing a 15-year plan to anticipate possible repairs or replacement needs and costs for the church and property. Barbara Smith Bacon, who has been researching solar power for the Green Team, asked if that was included. Carol Fields noted that in order for that project to be on the list there would need to be approval by council first. This may be considered next year.

Creation Justice: Expanding Our Environmental Awareness & Advocacy

**Green Team hosting two
speakers on Zoom ~
January 14 at 2:00 p.m.**

Darcy Young, Director of Planning and Communications for the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, and **Dr. Erika Diaz-Almeyda**, Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at New College will talk about their programs and how they impact our region's sustainability. This program is open to anyone, so invite a friend! We hope to open this to other faith communities.



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The second half of the discussion of the book *The Gulf: the Making of an American Sea* by Jack E. Davis, led by Sarah Melcher, will be on **January 28th at 3:30 p.m.** The completes our exploration of the Gulf of Mexico history, flora and fauna as related in *The Gulf*. Questions, or to register, contact Sarah Melcher [melchersj8856@gmail.com](mailto:melchersj8856@gmail.com)

## UCC Creation Justice Ministry Designation – Please Vote!



In May, 2020, the Church Council unanimously voted to adopt the Creation Justice Covenant set forth below. At our Annual Meeting later this month, you, our church members, will be asked to ratify adoption of the Covenant. If it is ratified, we will apply to the UCC for formal designation.

Our Covenant has been written specifically by and for our very own First Congregational United Church of Christ Sarasota, after extensive input from our church teams, allied organizations (*e.g., the UCC Women, Collage, Men's Breakfast, etc.*) and individual members. Consistent with one of the UCC's "3 Great Love's – Love of Creation - the Creation Justice ministry seeks to help align our relationship with God's Creation theologically and

with more environmentally sustainable practices. And we can honestly celebrate; our church has already done a LOT! With this designation, we will have even more opportunities to share ideas and best practices with other UCC Creation Justice-designated congregations.

***Below is the text of the Covenant.*** Questions?

Before Annual Meeting please contact Sarah Melcher, [melchersj8856@gmail.com](mailto:melchersj8856@gmail.com) or Barbara Smith-Bacon [bjsbacon@verizon.net](mailto:bjsbacon@verizon.net), co-chairs of the Green Team, which is part of the Peace and Justice Network.

"***We*** of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Sarasota, Florida, by vote of our Church Council and ratification by our Congregation, do solemnly commit to God, one another, and all creatures, to walk in God's ways by cherishing the earth and all living beings who dwell upon it. This is the divine creation and we commit to promoting its health and sustainability.

We acknowledge at the outset that we are inseparably part of the web of life; our well-being dependent on the welfare of fellow creatures. We recognize the utmost value in creation - inherent value independent of creation's usefulness for us. In this covenant, we understand that our creation is in crisis, in large part because of human activity. As a consequence, we promise to educate ourselves and others about the causes of and solutions to environmental degradation.

We commit to finding ways to respect and conserve our natural resources for the benefit of future generations and for the future of the planet. Because of our covenant with God and the earth, we will seek divine guidance and strive to follow God's will. We will pursue justice for the earth, protect vulnerable living things from exploitation, and seek remediation of the environmental damage humans have caused.



THIS COVENANT STATEMENT IS HEREBY ADOPTED this 19th day of May, 2020, by unanimous vote of the Church Council of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Sarasota, Florida. RATIFIED this \_\_\_ day of January 2021, by a Congregational vote of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Sarasota, Florida."

## Happy Anniversary to You . . .



- 1/1 Dennis and Evelyn Crooks
- 1/2 Tom and Sue Fields
- 1/6 Joy and Joe Mayer  
Ted and Lindsay Prospect
- 1/22 Stephen and Kika Landers

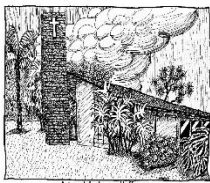


- 1/2 Lorraine Matthews  
Clarence Rogers
- 1/4 Mo Sherrill
- 1/5 Donald Vance  
Jennifer Walker
- 1/6 George Cubberly  
Alma Niemiller
- 1/7 Judy Black  
Thela Leach
- 1/9 Steve Combs
- 1/11 Rev. Budd Friend-Jones  
Kenneth Geiger  
Mildred Huisman  
Gail Taylor
- 1/12 Ian Kavanagh
- 1/13 Carol Binder  
Don Hoy  
Susan Moore  
Dorothy Reed
- 1/14 Ray Baker  
John Mange  
Irv Woods
- 1/15 Elizabeth Wildhack
- 1/16 Naya Staib
- 1/17 Carol Brickner  
Katie Kleppinger
- 1/18 Lynn Kuhn
- 1/19 Judith Merrill
- 1/21 Drue Murray
- 1/23 Betty Schattschneider
- 1/25 Eddie Brickner
- 1/26 Michael Dousa  
Sarah Dousa  
Jim Grob
- 1/27 Jeannie Mitchell
- 1/28 Linda Butler  
Christine Knupp
- 1/29 Dawn Swain
- 1/31 John Bryant  
Fran Stubblefield  
David York



IN  
LOVING  
MEMORY

Ruth Barnard  
Charlie Pennella



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC CHURCH  
 1031 Euclid Ave  
 Sarasota, FL 34237  
 www.uccsarasota.com



**The 2021 Flower Chart is NOW ready for YOU!** Do you have a special occasion coming up this year? Would you like to celebrate on an upcoming Sunday service? Each Sunday, there is an opportunity for two

bouquets. **The cost is \$40 per bouquet, payable to the church.** Please sign up for a Sunday by emailing **Bobbi** at [admin@uccsarasota.com](mailto:admin@uccsarasota.com) We are grateful for the fresh flowers every Sunday that bring the beauty of God's creation into our worship space.

**STAFF**

Senior Minister.....Rev Dr. Wes Bixby  
 Minister of Music.....Gregory Chestnut  
 Office Manager.....Bobbi Miller  
 Campus Manager.....Mark Swain  
 Bookkeeper .....Bill Lewis  
 Collector.....Gordon Quimby

**OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Moderator.....Warren Bacon  
 Vice Moderator.....Carol Fields  
 Past Moderator.....Lori White  
 Co-treasurers..... Sarah Dousa & Robin Reich  
 Pastor Emeritus.....Dr. John Syster  
 Contributing Photographer.....Susan Moore  
 On-line Newsletter....Carol McCloud, Wes Curry

***We are an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ in the Florida Conference of the UCC.***

Telephone: (941) 953-7044; Fax: (941) 952-5245

Email: [office@uccsarasota.com](mailto:office@uccsarasota.com); Website: [www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)

**We are worshipping on-line via Facebook Livestreams each Sunday at 10:55 am and the service is posted to our website for streaming by 1 p.m. each Sunday afternoon. We also worship at 9a.m. on Sundays in a live outdoor service when weather permits.**

