



# First Congregational UCC

I pray for God’s love to enfold and hold you every day. There are several important updates from the church.

**Worship** – As we enter May, we will continue to offer three opportunities for worship. Please see the sidebar on this page for the options you have. I pray you will sense God’s presence whichever way you feel most comfortable in worship.

**A Wonderful Opportunity** - In March of last year (just as we were beginning on-line worship), we were blessed to welcome a new member, **John Ristow**. John has been an active part of our church since then, participating in Zoom conversations on race, coffee hour, and COLLAGE. **John has been accepted to attend Chicago Theological Seminary starting in the Fall.** On April 20<sup>th</sup>, our Church Council strongly affirmed John’s call to seminary and to service the church. Below is a brief bio from John.



*My growing up in Northern Michigan, my family and I always strived for a deeper relationship with God, which included helping those in need. After graduating from Eastern Michigan University, I taught students with special needs and advocated for workers’ rights as a communications director. I have also studied mission work through Harvard and Columbia Universities.*

*My journey of faith has taken place in the United States, Czech Republic, Haiti and Benin, West Africa. God has always called me to serve people who*

*experience extreme discrimination, violence, economic inequities, food shortages, inaccessible health care and systemic education failures. Recently, I was accepted to Chicago Theological Seminary’s online divinity program, which focuses on social justice ministries.*

**Finally** - Coming in June, we will launch into a sermon series on the Lord’s Prayer. You will read more about this in the Midweek Message and next month’s newsletter. I am so excited to be working with Cindy Woodling, Dale Moore, and others to bring these familiar and faithful words to life in June. If there is any way I can offer support or you ever want to talk, I am around campus and would love to see you.

With great love to you all ~ Wes

## May Hours

**Pastor Wes:**

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

**Volunteers:**

*Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.*

**Mark:**

*Mon. – Fri.: 7 a.m.-3 p.m.*

**Greg:**

*Tues. – Fri.: various hours*

## Worship Options



- **Outdoor worship ~ 9 a.m.** on the Wendling Terrace. You are welcome to sit inside or bring a lawn chair and sit outside. **Please wear a mask.**
- **On-line worship ~ 10:55 a.m.** Livestream on Facebook, YouTube and our website.
- **In-person, in-the-sanctuary (25% capacity) with masks, social distancing and only the soloist singing.**
- **Zoom Coffee Hour at noon** will continue in May.

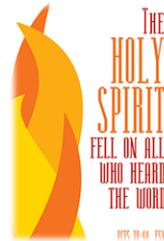
## Worship in May

**May 2nd** ~ We will celebrate Holy Communion together and focus on Genesis 2:4-7.

**May 9th** ~ Mother's Day Celebration. We will honor Saint Sarah who laughed prayerfully with God in Genesis 18:1-15.

**May 16th** ~ We will engage the story of Exodus 32:1-6 naming and noticing the ways we still craft/create idols today.

**May 23rd ~ Pentecost Sunday!** Please wear **RED** and have a red ribbon ready to wave celebrating the Holy Spirit! For those who attend the in-person opportunities, ribbons will be provided. Focus passage: Acts 2:1-13.



**May 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Summer Sermon Series: Letters of Faith** focusing on Romans 5.

### **PBS "The Black Church: This is Our Story. This is Our Song."**

*(Six-Week Event on Zoom in partnership with African-American Cultural Resource Center and Manasota branch of the American Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH))*

**We continue our sacred conversation on the rich history of an institution at the heart of the African American Experience. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.,** will take us on a journey through time. We will learn more about key events, important people, political debates and the musical traditions that have shaped the Black Church. **We invite all to participate in this important experience. We will offer two opportunities each week – all on Zoom:**

**Wednesdays at 3 p.m. ~ (May 5 & 12)**  
**Thursdays at 7 p.m. ~ (May 6 & 13)**

**Week 5** - Civil Rights Movement and Role of Black Women; Political Action; Black Muslims; White Backlash; Gospel versus Secular Music; Black Power Movement; Black Theology; Prosperity Gospel; Heterosexism.

**Week 6**– Political Activism; Hip Hop; Heterosexism; Prosperity Gospel; Radical Theology; White Supremacists Violence; Police Brutality; Civic Activism.

**For the link to register, please see your Midweek Message. Each week we will watch a 40-minute segment and have dialogue around what we are learning in this journey together.**

You can view the whole two-part series on YouTube or stream for free on the PBS website. We encourage all people in the season of Easter to learn more about the historical importance of the church. We pray you will join us for the conversation. There is room for you and plenty of space for your friends to join us.

## Join the Zoom Conversation



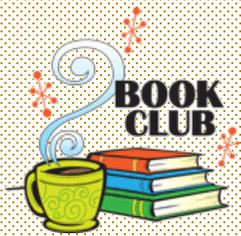
- **Sunday Coffee Hour at Noon** ~ You are **always welcome** to join in the conversation and connect with other members!
- **COLLAGE Tuesdays @ 11 a.m.** ~ Collage is our LGBTQ and Ally Group. All are welcome to join our Collage group on Zoom for support and faithful discussions.
- **Tuesday Bible Study @ 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.
- **Wednesday @ 3 p.m. Thursday @ 7 p.m. Sacred Conversations on Race** ~ PBS "The Black Church: This Is Our Story. This Is Our Song."

## Staffing Team Update

The Staffing Team is continuing to discuss and prayerfully discern the job description for our Office Manager. We know there have been many changes around the church over the last year. In December, the Staffing Team hired **Douglas Kingsley as our Media Specialist** to help us with our Sunday Morning on-line worship livestream. We hear wonderful feedback on the ways Douglas' creativity is a blessing to those participating from your home. The Staffing Team followed a process over the past year with hiring Douglas, which included paying attention to our current needs and thoughtful projection of future needs.

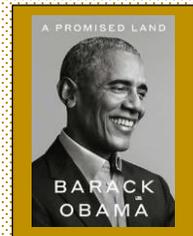
The Staffing Team will follow a similar process with the Office Manager position. We ask for your patience and prayers as we seek to move forward. If you have questions, please talk to Dick Miller or Pastor Wes.

### NEW! Book Club Moves to Outdoors



#### Tuesday Book Club @ 1 p.m., May 11 ~

*A Promised Land* by Barack Obama. We will be meeting outdoors at **Bay Preserve at Osprey Point**. In case of rain, Zoom will be setup. Our group is coed and would love to have new members. Contact Nancy McElroy (fnmcelroy@gmail.com) if you are interested or have any questions.



### PROJECT 180 PREPARES FOR STRONG VOICES STRONG SUBJECTS LECTURE SERIES' EIGHTH SEASON

Tickets available for Project 180's Final Lecture in Series



In partnership with The Boxser Diversity Initiative, Project 180 presents its eighth season of the nation's only annual lecture series dedicated to prisoner reentry topics. The 2021 season addresses ***The Intersection of Trauma, Addiction, and Incarceration: Implications for Mental Health and Well-Being***.

The Strong Voices Lecture Series provides meaningful public education about prisoner reentry issues and features nationally recognized scholars, industry experts, community leaders, and those affected by incarceration and reentry. Strong Voices is an integral part of Project 180's mission to reintegrate formerly incarcerated citizens into community life and serves as one of the organization's major fundraisers to provide stable housing, educational programs, and resources to currently and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Project 180 will host this third lecture on ZOOM with opportunities for guests to engage with Project 180 residents in breakout rooms. All lectures begin at 11:30 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m.

#### Event Topic: In His Own Words

**When:** Friday, May 7, 2021

**Featuring:** Jody Feinroth, **formerly incarcerated citizen**, shares the ways in which trauma, addiction, and incarceration have affected his life journey.

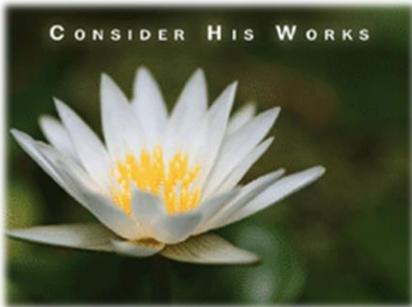


Tickets may be secured on the Project 180 website at [www.project180reentry.org/lecture-series/](http://www.project180reentry.org/lecture-series/)

## Peace and Justice Network News

### Green Team News:

#### A Toxic Combination of Three Things



What do Florida citrus greening, a dangerous neurotoxin and a medically important antibiotic in the worldwide fight

against tuberculosis have in common? They certainly aren't three items you'd normally expect to see in the same sentence.

In late December, the EPA approved the use of the previously-canceled pesticide aldicarb on citrus in Florida. "Aldicarb is banned in about 100 countries and is only one of 36 pesticides that the WHO has called 'extremely hazardous'." (WUSF news 1/13/21). Aldicarb can cause weakness, blurred vision, and tremors. It can paralyze the respiratory system leading to death. A systemic pesticide, aldicarb is absorbed through the plant's roots and makes its way to the fruit. Ingesting a single granule of aldicarb will kill a bird or mammal according to the EPA. Aldicarb could expose bees to 76 times the level of pesticide known to cause harm to them. Aldicarb can now be used on tens of thousands of acres in Florida citrus groves. There are at

least 18 other pesticides that will kill the insect causing citrus greening, none of which are nearly as toxic.

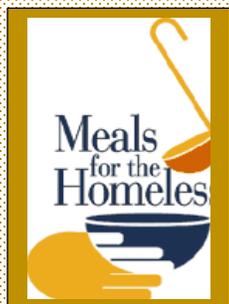
At the same time that aldicarb was approved, the EPA also approved spraying streptomycin on Florida's citrus groves. The CDC and FDA have spoken out against using medically important antibiotics as pesticides. Antibiotic resistant infection rates are on the rise. The WHO considers streptomycin as "critically important" to treating human disease, including multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. Globally more than 1 million people are killed by tuberculosis annually. Spraying antibiotics on citrus trees endangers mammals and pollinators. Using antibiotics on trees has been proven highly ineffective in combating citrus greening.

There are coalitions trying to stop the use of the neurotoxin and the antibiotic on our citrus trees. For more information, these websites will get you started:

<https://www.news-press.com/story/tech/science/environment/2021/03/25/groups-sue-environmental-protection-agency-over-approval-streptomycin-use-citrus-trees/6976127002/>

<https://news.wgcu.org/news/2021-03-25/will-a-known-neurotoxin-be-used-on-florida-citrus>

### Community Meals:



We continue to provide a monthly community meal at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Our meal is cooked by Sandy Smith with home-baked cookies from the many bakers in our church added as a sweet treat.

We need your **home-baked cookies**, and if you are able, we could use **help in preparing our take-out meal**. Please join us on **May 25 from 4-6 p.m.** Volunteer and/or inquire for more details—Carol Hagglund at [carolhagglund@gmail.com](mailto:carolhagglund@gmail.com).



5/1 Cheryl Beller

5/15 Gerald VanHoose

5/3 Kathy & Steve Combs

5/2 Charles Jarman  
Sue Shiffrin

5/16 Barbara Edelin

5/6 Drue & Len Murray

5/6 Blaine Pool

5/20 Richard Sparrow

5/7 Harold & Joy Kuhn

5/7 William Coleman

5/22 Debbie Hays  
Carmen Landers  
Robert Quarles

5/11 Rick & Jean-Marie Steele

5/9 Gina Bixby

5/26 Helaine Eckstein

5/20 Howard & Gail Taylor

5/10 Patricia Rolf

5/27 David H. Kerrigan

5/23 Donald & Dannie Vance

5/11 Bettye Smith

5/28 Virginia Cardozo  
Ellyn Drummond  
Taylor Steele

5/25 Jim & Max Althouse

5/12 Elizabeth Early  
Becky May

5/28 Jeff & Sarah Sands

5/13 Garvey Clarke  
Sandy Smith

5/29 William Hansen

5/30 Fernando & Betsy Traba

5/14 Harold Mezile

5/30 Gregory Chestnut

5/31 Christine Millar





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



*Altar Flowers*

**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 [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  
Campus Manager .....Mark Swain  
Media Specialist.....Douglas Kingsley  
Bookkeeper ..... Bill Lewis  
Collector..... Gordon Quimby

**OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Moderator..... Carol Fields  
Vice Moderator ..... Jim Butterworth  
Past Moderator ..... Warren Bacon  
Co-treasurers... Robin Reich & Michael Johnston  
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 worshiping on-line via Livestreams each week at 10:55 a.m. and the service is posted to our website for streaming by 1 p.m. each Sunday afternoon.**

