



First Congregational UCC

Twenty thousand to thirty thousand ~ that's the average number of words you hear/read/see each day. Over two hundred thousand each week. Close to one million each month. By the way, you've already read forty words by the end of this sentence. Within our lifetime, means of communications have gone from basically the television, telephones wired to the wall, print media (newspapers and periodicals), and face-to-face conversations to all of us carrying in our pockets a device (cell phone) that keeps us connected every hour of every day. Texts, instant messages, phone calls, emails, posts on social media, endless number of websites, podcasts, and I could go on and on with the ways you swim in a sea of words.

My question for you to prayerfully ponder: How best do you hear/comprehend in a world of information overload? How best can the church communicate to you?

- Some of you prefer paper ~ written words in bulletin announcements and newsletters.
- Some of you love the digital ways of midweek messages and morning meditations.
- Some might prefer text messages to emails.
- Some of you might like a phone call to get your updates from a friendly voice.

How we communicate as a church is as important as what we communicate. My deepest prayer is to share God's love in our interactions. My second prayer is to cut through the noisy world with words that are both inspirational and informational; meaningful and helpful.

Office Hours

Pastor Wes:

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

Sherry Glover:

Mon.-Tues.: 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wed.-Thurs.: 10:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Mark:

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

Greg:

Tues. - Sat.: various hours



- **Worship ~ 9 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. in person in the Sanctuary and livestream on Facebook, YouTube and our website.**
- **Fellowship ~**
 - 1st (Birthday Sunday)
 - 3rd (Bread for the World)

We are following CDC website for Sarasota to determine our mask policy. **(See Page 3)**

But...even with my powerful cell phone...I can't read your mind. I don't know the best way to reach you. **I need your help.**

In the coming weeks you will receive a survey from the church on communication and keeping connected. You can really help us by giving thought to how you receive and process information. For example, I learn best through audio and visual. I love videos. As someone who is intentionally cutting down on paper usage, I try to get things via email. You may have noticed that I am using an iPad to lead worship. That's me. What about you?

Let's find ways to connect and communicate in ways that can help.

A few important announcements about the church:

- Over the summer, committees are reviewing **by-laws for the 2023 Annual Meeting** in January; Security on Sunday mornings; Communication; Solar Panels as part of our Creation Justice Covenant; and living our Racial Justice and Open and Affirming Covenants! Plus, we worship, sing, study the Bible, drum, keep our church facilities and finances in good order.
- On October 2nd, in coordination with the release of my book, *The Bible in 52 Weeks for Families: A Yearlong Bible Study*, we will launch small groups to read the Bible in 2022-2023. Please see the announcement in this newsletter.
- In October, we will kick off our **Stewardship intention of giving on October 9th**. See the announcement in this newsletter.
- And we will welcome **Valerie Tutson on October 23rd**.
- Finally, we have accepted the resignation of Julian Bermudez as our Financial Administrator effective October 2. We are grateful to Julian for all his hard work. We wish him the best in his future endeavors, sharing his skills in new positions. Please watch the midweek message for updates from the Staffing Team and Moderators on this position.

If you have questions or comments, please let me know. I want YOU to feel connected and God's love to enfold you. I pray October has a refreshing, renewal of God's grace.

Many blessings and God's love ~ Wes

October Worship ~ at 9 and 11 a.m. (11 a.m. also online)

October 2 ~ World Communion Sunday ~ We gather at Christ's table with our brothers and sisters from the North, South, East, and West. Pastor Wes will preach on Genesis 37, selected verses, and our Chancel Choir will sing.

October 9 ~ Kick off for Stewardship at both services with our Vice Moderator, Nancy Morris, telling OUR story. This is also **Indigenous People Day** and our Choir will honor this day with a special anthem. Pastor Wes will begin preaching on Exodus 1:6-22.

October 16 ~ This is **World Food Day**, and our Green Team will continue with our Stewardship theme, "We Have a Story to Tell". Pastor Wes will continue to preach on Exodus, 2:1-10. **This is also WATER Sunday, bring the water you've collected from your travels or bring some from your tap!**



October 23 ~ Welcome storyteller **Valerie Tutson** back! She will be part of both the 9 and 11 a.m. worship services. This will be a GLORIOUS Sunday.

October 30 ~ Reformation Sunday ~ Pastor Wes will preach on Exodus 3:1-15. Our Racial Justice Mission Team will continue our Stewardship theme, "We Have a Story to Tell".

November 6 ~ All Saints Day ~ We honor our Saints on this holy day. Our COLLAGE brothers and sisters will share their reflections on our Stewardship theme, "We Have a Story to Tell." We will light candles for church members, family, and friends who died this last year.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION on COVID

- ❖ **Both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services will be in the Sanctuary**
- ❖ **9 a.m. will remain masked**
- ❖ **11 a.m. in the sanctuary/livestream & will follow the CDC website regarding masking:**

*At a **low level (green)** masks are highly encouraged, and we will **reserve the side sections only for those who wear masks.** Fellowship will be offered.*

*At a **medium level (yellow)**, **everyone will mask in worship,** Fellowship will be offered for those who wish to attend.*

*At a **high level (red)**, **everyone will mask, and** we will encourage **online worship, rope off pews,** and **not** host Fellowship Time.*

*Each week, **the Midweek Message, and signs on the church doors** will inform worship attenders of the risk level and the need to mask. We continue to ask for prayers, understanding and support in following these guidelines.*

October 2nd (after 11 a.m. service) Kick-Off to Reading the Bible in a Year

On October 2, Pastor Wes will kick-off a year of reading the Bible. Recently, "*The Bible in 52 Weeks for Families: A Yearlong Bible Study*" by Pastor Wes was published. If you have been curious about the Bible or ever wanted to read Scripture with others, **THIS** is your chance.

Wait...you may ask...WHY would I do this?

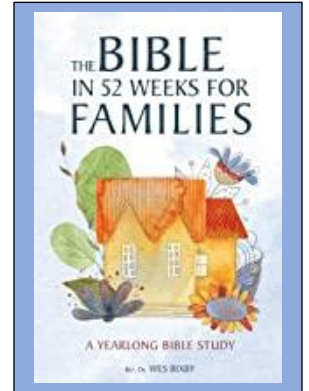
We live in a world of words ~ much of what we hear each day causes hurt. Scripture can guide, heal, and offer new perspectives for us in these days.

But...isn't the Bible, well, a bit dated?

To be sure, not every verse in Scripture will set your heart aflutter or cause your soul to stir. But there is hope to strengthen and sustain us in the pages of scripture too.

But...can I really do this?

YES! We will cheer each other on!



Join Pastor Wes **after 11 a.m. worship on October 2nd** to ask questions and learn more about this opportunity. **Copies of Pastor Wes's book will be available to purchase for \$10.** The gathering on October 2nd is hybrid. Let Pastor Wes know if you need the Zoom link. In the year to come, on this adventure through the Bible, there will be moments of insight, inspiration, laughter, questioning, wrestling, and many...many...many times to celebrate together.

Special Movie Event – Free



Please join us on **October 2nd at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center.** In celebration of **Hispanic Heritage Month**, we will watch the movie *Encanto*.

Encanto is an enchanting film about family and finding your way in the world that speaks to all ages, plus the music is catchy! Popcorn and drinks provided. ALL are welcome to come and enjoy an afternoon matinee.



Stewardship Kick-Off ~ October 9th

We will kick off our Stewardship invitation on October 9th with the theme, **"We have a story to tell."**



Our story is one that is filled with faithfulness, innovation, and proclaiming of God's love for all. Our story is sung in our music; our story is found in inclusiveness; our story is one of partnership with all creation; and our story is one of racial justice. Your financial gifts help us shine a light to Sarasota and beyond.

In October you will receive a letter inviting YOU to offer your time, talents, and intention of giving to support the ministry and mission of First Congregational UCC for 2023!

Considering Membership at First UCC?

New Member Class: November 6th ~ A light lunch will be provided after the 11 a.m. service while you explore and learn how you might see yourself in our church family. Come learn our story and share yours or just listen—no stress/pressure intended!



New Member Sunday: November 27th ~ All who wish to join will be welcomed and received at our 11 a.m. service with fellowship time afterwards to meet and greet.

Contact the church office or Pastor Wes for more information. **All are welcome here!**

Church Bus Drivers Needed



We are seeking bus drivers to share in picking up our members at Plymouth Harbor on Sunday morning. **NO SPECIAL LICENSE NEEDED.** "If you can drive an SUV, you can easily drive our bus." **Training will be offered, and you do not have to commit to long term.** Imagine the joy you will experience when you pick up our loved ones and see their smiles. Please see Pastor Wes about this opportunity to "feed, tend and be present."

You Are Invited to a **SURE** House Meeting Sunday, October 23rd after church



- When:** Sunday, October 23rd, (after the 11 a.m. service)
Who: All who are interested in **JUSTICE** for all
Where: Syster Hall
What: To share what is on our hearts and get to know each other
Why: Because we are all created in GOD'S image and required to do justice.
Micah 6:8



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NOVEMBER 8th

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Mark Your Calendar ~ Valerie Tutson, October 23rd ~ Both Services



Valerie Tutson

Back by popular demand - **Valerie Tutson**, award winning member of the Providence Rhode Island Story Tellers, returns to us. Many will remember when she was here in 2019, offering a Saturday morning workshop and a Sunday story telling /sermon.

With a self-designed BA in Storytelling as a Communications Art and an MA in Theater Arts from Brown University, Valerie has taught a Master class on using storytelling as a tool to create an inclusive community. Once again, she will entertain and enlighten us with captivating stories from around the world at a Saturday event as well as during the Sunday services.

CREATION JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS

October 16 is World Food Day

Join us in Syster Hall after church for fellowship and education

You might wonder why someone from the Green Team is writing about World Food Day, because isn't our team concerned only with environmental sustainability?

The connection is climate change has made people in poverty more vulnerable to food insecurity. Weather extremes resulting in flooding or drought can cause crop failures. People go hungry when they cannot access reliable sources of food.

World Food Day raises our awareness of global, regional, and local people who are hungry. One organization that addresses hunger in a helpful way is **Bread for the World**. This organization encourages our political leaders to take action to eradicate hunger both at home and abroad. Bread for the World urges faith groups to support its work.



On **Sunday, October 16**, the Green Team and the Fellowship Team will honor World Food Day and acknowledge the efforts of Bread for the World.

During fellowship time in **Syster Hall** after the **11:00 a.m.** service, we will feature different kinds of bread from around the world that you can sample. Come and enjoy!

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT NEWS



~ ALL ARE WELCOME ~

COLLAGE ZOOM DISCUSSIONS: COLLAGE will continue to hold twice monthly Zoom group discussions on Tuesday at **11 a.m. on October 11th (National Coming Out Day) and October 5th**. Contact Sara Little for the Zoom link.

COLLAGE MONTHLY LUNCHEONS: On Sunday, **October 9th, after the 11:00 church service**, COLLAGE will resume its monthly luncheon program. Please save this date on your calendar. as more details will follow.

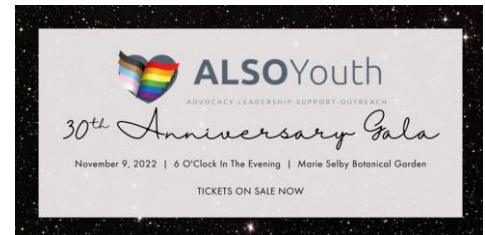
COLLAGE TO PRESENT AT FLORIDA UCC CONFERENCE: COLLAGE has been invited by the Florida UCC Conference to give a presentation on October 9th at its Fall Gathering in Vero Beach, Florida. Our work continues with the historical video detailing the history of COLLAGE and will be shared at the Florida Conference.



COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Gala/FundRaisers:

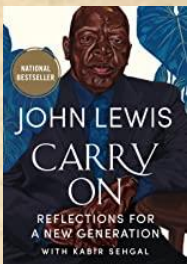
- **Equality Florida Suncoast Celebration: October 30th**, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. at Michael's on East www.eqfl.org
- **ALSOYouth 30th Anniversary Gala: November 9th**, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens www.alsoyouth.org



RACIAL JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS



Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR)



We continue our Sacred Conversations on Race on **Wednesdays at 3 p.m.** On September 28th we will begin our study of ***Carry On* by John Lewis**.

There is **ALWAYS** space and place for you to join in this conversation or to just listen. Each week we marvel at what we are learning. Truly, **ALL ARE WELCOME HERE!** If you have questions or need a **Zoom** link, let Pastor Wes know.

Coming To Syster Hall

THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP LEARNING SIMULATION

Saturday November 12th ~ 10:00-12:30 (Lunch Included)

Registration Deadline: Oct. 30



The rich keep getting richer, and the poor keep getting poorer as the saying goes. But why is this true? What factors created this inequality and continue to keep it in existence?

THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP LEARNING SIMULATION, a program of Bread for the World, is an interactive tool that helps people understand the connections among racial equity, hunger, poverty, and wealth.

Participants learn how federal policies have created structural inequalities such as property ownership and education, and how these policies increase hunger and poverty in communities of color.

Below is a link to a 3-minute video about the simulation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0y-Fz2Io2s&t=5s>

"It was shocking to see so many policies/laws that have impacted in real ways the lives of those of our community based on skin color." ~ Lauren

"I thought some of the things I had heard about policies affecting people of color were a myth, but this simulation made me realize that the gaps didn't happen overnight and it's going to take a lot of work to make it right." ~ Anne

The Racial Justice Mission Group is sponsoring this event and is inviting members of some other faith communities to join us in this **free** session of The Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation.

Please join us for this fascinating program lasting 90 minutes with a **free box lunch** to follow.



*In keeping with our goal as a **Green Church**, you are encouraged to bring your own water bottle to reduce the need for plastic cups.*



Watch for a **registration sheet in the Sunday bulletin starting October 16**. You can also register and request a vegetarian or gluten free lunch by emailing the church at admin@uccsarasota.com or by calling the church office by Oct. 30th

Join Us For A Tour Of Echo Farm

ECHO Farm invites us to “explore its lush tropical garden, experience its friendly farm animals and learn about ECHO’s mission to help families help themselves out of hunger and poverty.” In alignment with our Creation Justice Covenant, one of the nine Biblical themes on which ECHO Farm is based is “The first great commission given to humanity is to steward God’s creation.” What better place to see this in action than at ECHO Farm.

November 10th is the day we have arranged for a private, 2-hour tour of ECHO Farm for our congregation. Following the tour, we will have a BYO picnic lunch on their grounds in a screened pavilion. Our tour will begin at 10:15, and a golf cart/tram will be available for those who cannot walk the entire tour. The cost of the tour is just \$10.50 per person.

We will have a church bus, leaving at 8:45 a.m., or people can drive themselves. (ECHO Farm is located at 17391 Durrance Road in North Fort Myers, FL.) If you plan on taking the church bus, be at the church at 8:30. When you register (see below), let Nancy know whether you will be taking the bus or driving yourself. To register for the tour and/or to get more information, contact Nancy McElroy at fnmcelroy@gmail.com or 941-527-7257. The deadline for registration is **October 15**.

Call now so that you don’t miss this wonderful opportunity to experience how the needs of the poor and hungry worldwide are being addressed through teaching families small-scale, sustainable farming and “spreading the love of God in word and seed.”

(For more information about ECHO Farm go to <https://echonet.org>.)



Kings And Queens Bridge ~ October 10th

Kings and Queens Bridge is looking for new players, if you are interested in playing contract bridge for fun. We play on the second Monday afternoon from **1:00 - 4:00** in **Room 9** of the **Education Building**. **Please join us.**

We welcome ALL--whether you have been playing for years, have been on hiatus or if you have always wanted to learn how to play, this is the group for you.

Please call Ethel Rudy at 941-727-0122 or email me at loisrudy253@gmail.com if you are interested in playing with us or wish to learn more.



Community Meal ~ October 25th



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

We need your **home-baked items**, and if you are able, we could use **help in serving our guests**. Please volunteer with set-up/serving/clean-up functions at St. Paul's Fellowship Hall. We are serving more each month and can always use your help. You will be richly rewarded by this ministry to others.



Please join us on **October 25th from 4-6:30 p.m.** Volunteer and/or inquire for more details: Carol Hagglund at carol.hagglund@gmail.com.

Artful Prayer ~ Thursday, October 13th 2 p.m. Hybrid—Zoom/Oasis Center



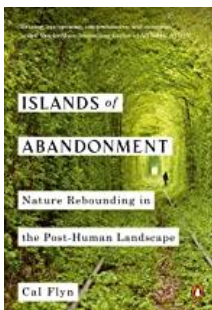
This ALL SAINTS/ALL SOULS DAY focused Artful Prayer will help you honor those who have touched your lives in your past and remember how they have helped you grow into who you are today.

No art experience is needed—just bring a piece of paper, colored pencils/crayons/markers, pencil, and a round object the right size to trace two circles on your piece of paper.

Contact the church office or Pastor Wes for the Zoom link.

Ready Readers ~ October 13th

Ready Readers is a book discussion group that meets on the second Thursday of every month at **noon in the Oasis Center**. We welcome and encourage the participation and input of new members even if you are not able to attend every meeting. For more information and further updates, contact Sandy Smith at sandysmithvi@gmail.com or 340-227-5121.



We will be discussing ***"Islands of Abandonment: nature rebounding in the posthuman landscape"*** by Cal Flynn. *Islands of Abandonment* is a tour through these new ecosystems, in all their glory, as sites of unexpected environmental significance, where the natural world has reasserted its wild power and promise. And while it doesn't let us off the hook for addressing environmental degradation and climate change, it is a case that hope is far from lost and it is ultimately a story of redemption: The most polluted spots on Earth can be rehabilitated through ecological processes and, in fact, they already are.

First UCC Women's Luncheons Resume ~ October 4th @ 11:30 a.m.

MARIE SELBY
BOTANICAL
GARDENS



In keeping with our Green Covenant and the UCC Women's theme this year, "God Caring for Creation," the Women's Association will begin its series of monthly programs at **11:30 a.m. on October 4, 2022.**

Our speaker from Selby Gardens, Wendy Deming, COO, will give us a historical review of how Marie Selby came to choose her location for her home and to develop the gardens with Florida-friendly plantings.



Wendy will highlight what plants we can choose that do well in this climate, such as those not requiring a lot of water. **All are welcome.** Luncheon is \$12. Please sign up after Sunday worship or call the church office.

Save The Date ~ First UCC Women's Luncheon – November 1st @ 11:30 a.m.



Besides luxurious high-rises and McMansions under construction, we have homeless families and youth in Sarasota. Some live in their cars, some in the woods, and some wherever they can find a bench.

The Women's Association has assembled a panel of experts to give us an update on homelessness on Tuesday, November 1, at 11:30 a.m. Chris Johnson, Executive Director of the Partnership to End Homelessness will lead the discussion; he **will be joined by Ms. Alex Dustin from CASL (Community-Assisted Supported Living)** and Jim Rouches from Harvest House.

We welcome our neighbor, The Sisterhood of Temple Shalom, to join us. Cost for lunch is \$12. **All are welcome.** Please sign up to attend after Sunday worship or call the church office.



STITCHES OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Winter will be here soon, but it will be much colder in South Dakota. I am presently collecting items to send to our friends in Rapid City. A large collection was sent last spring, and a few knitters have been busy during the summer.

If you have items ready to be sent, you can bring them to the church office any time and I will pick them up. For those not familiar with our program, we send knitted and crocheted items for the reservations in South Dakota. We send hats, scarves, mittens, sweaters and blankets or other items if we receive them. Sizes range from infants to adults.

If you aren't a knitter, donations of washable acrylic yarn are welcome. I have needles and some baby yarn available at the present time. If you are interested in joining in this project, let me know at loisrudy253@gmail.com or call me at 941-727-0122. Many thanks to all contributors. ~ Ethel Rudy

Save The Date ~ December 6th @ 11:30 a.m.
Christmas is coming to Syster Hall
First UCC Women's Association SENIOR CHRISTMAS BOX FILLING EVENT



You are invited to join with the UCC Women's Association on Tuesday, **December 6th at 11:30 a.m.** in filling and wrapping our SENIOR CHRISTMAS BOXES. These special boxes are distributed throughout Sarasota before the holiday to shut-in seniors. To make these boxes special and meaningful, we ask that **ALL donations be NEW, UNOPENED, and PRE-PACKAGED.**

A \$12 lunch will be served, and Carols will be sung! **Sign up after the 9 a.m. service with Joy Kuhn or after the 11 a.m. service with Connie Toops.**

This list will help you get started on your shopping. This is a wonderful way to brighten someone's day. May the joy you experience in making them be wrapped in each box.



New Personal Hygiene Items

Hand lotions
Soaps
Packaged toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Wet-wipes
Hand sanitizer
Shampoo and conditioner
Deodorant
Tissues (small for pocket or purse)
Comb
Brush
Socks
Handkerchiefs

New Stationery Items

Stamps
Magnifying glass
Boxed or prepackaged greeting cards
Pre-packaged pens
Post-it notes
Pre-packaged colored pencils
Coloring book
Small puzzles, Sudoku, crossword books
Devotional book
Pocket calendar

Other

Small stuffed animal
Christmas ornament

***Please, NO wall calendars, candles or candy that may melt**

October Birthdays



10/2	Ann Mosher Joshua Starcher	10/15	Peter Burroughs Jeane Gomoll-Hilficker Allyn Jones
10/3	Lynne Woodman	10/17	Ethan Bixby Josh Burch
10/4	Jeff Jones	10/18	Kathy Combs
10/7	Bob Procter	10/20	Barbara Brady Rick Steele
10/9	Lee Brockmann Melanie Kalisak Marge Lothian	10/21	Ruth Bieber Karen Crane Elaine Zelows
10/10	Kathy Kulakowski	10/22	Gibson Mitchell
10/11	Vonda Leonard	10/25	Margo Light Gregory Matthews
10/12	Jean L. Kerrigan Sherry Mange Kenneth Martin	10/26	Juliana McFarlane
10/13	Lois Wilkins		
10/14	Wes Curry		

October Anniversaries



10/9	Michael & James Cross
10/11	Frank & Elaine Hallice Charles Williams & Madge Potts-Williams
10/12	James & Jane Hunder
10/15	Nathan & Bonnie Richards
10/16	John Hilficker & Jeane Gomoll-Hilficker
10/18	Jeff & Sandy Smith
10/25	Bob & Pamela Gore-Meade

October 90+ Wise Birthdays

10/2 ~ Ann Mosher
10/9 ~ Lee Brockmann

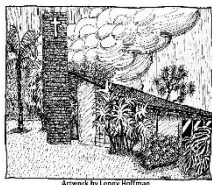


We would like to shower with cards our **90+ wise** members on their birthdays. To do this, we need to know if you will be celebrating such a joyous birthday.

Please contact Sherry in our church office to be included.



Louis Lashley



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



The 2022 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.
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 ManagerMark Swain
Media Specialist.....Douglas Kingsley
Financial AdministratorTBD
Financial Manager.....Susan Fields
Office AdministratorSherry Glover

OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Moderator..... Jim Butterworth
Vice Moderator Nancy Morris
Past ModeratorCarol Fields
Co-Treasurers..... .Robin Reich & Dale Woodling
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; Website: www.uccsarasota.com

We are worshipping on-line via Livestreams each week at 11 a.m., and the service is posted to our website for streaming by 1 p.m. each Sunday afternoon.

