



February 12, 2023

11 a.m.

Flowers given by **Gib and Jeannie Mitchell**, in loving memory of their daughter **Karyn Humphrys & Melanie Kalisak**, in memory of her mother, **Charlotte Stone's**, Valentine's Day birthday.

PRELUDE

Give Me Jesus

arr. Mark Hayes

CALL to WORSHIP

One: Over the years, powerful and profound wisdom has been shared about prayer.

Many: **Prayer is exploring and experiencing a friendship with God.**

One: At first, I thought prayer was to change God, now I realize prayer changes me.

Many: **To sing is to pray twice.**

One: And while we could continue quoting wisdom about prayer for another hour, let us dive deeply into this sweet hour of prayer.

Many: **It is good to be here. Alleluia and Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN

Sweet Hour of Prayer

#505

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! that calls me from a world of care, and bids me at my Maker's throne let all my needs and wants be known. In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and oft escaped the tempter's snare by your return, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! the joys I feel, the bliss I share of those whose anxious spirits burn with strong desires for your return! With them I hasten to the place where I would know my Savior's face, And gladly take my station there, and wait for you, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! whose wings shall my petition bear to One whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless. And since I'm bid to seek God's face, believe God's word, and trust God's grace, I'll cast away my every care, and wait for you, sweet hour of prayer!

***OPENING PRAYER**

One: As the words of the hymn settle into our hearts and stir our souls, lean in and listen to what you just prayerfully sang:

Many: **In this sweet hour of prayer, we name and notice our needs and wants.**

One: Who do you carry in your heart this morning? (*Silence*)

Where is there an ache today? (*Silence*)

Is there a relationship you long for reconciliation? (*Silence*)

One: While "help" is one of the most essential prayers, so is, "Thank you!"

Many: **The joys that surround us, laughter's healing art, and moments when our hearts overflow with gratitude!**

One: Where this last week did You sense the spirit moving in your life that sent goosebumps down your arms? (*Silence*)

One: We trust in the promise that God's presence is here with faithfulness and love to encounter and engage us.

Many: **We remember the Psalmist in awe proclaiming, "I delighted and danced when they said let us go into the house of God."**

One: Where is your soul surging with a sense of wonder and awe today? (*Silence*)

One: And we join our voices now in the ancient Hebrew hymnal words of Psalm 23.

Many: **The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. God makes me lie down in green pastures; leads me beside still waters; God restores my soul and leads me in right paths for God's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

***SUNG RESPONSE**

God Is My Shepherd

God is my shepherd, I'll not want, I feed in pastures green, God grants me rest and bids me drink from waters calm and clean.

Goodness and mercy all my days will surely follow me; and where God reigns in heaven and earth, my dwelling place will be.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:5-14

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to God who is in secret, and God who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for God knows what you need before you ask. ⁹“Pray, then, in this way: Our Father in heaven, may your name be revered as holy. ¹⁰May your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. ¹⁴“For if you forgive others their trespasses, God will also forgive you.

SERMON

Why Prayer?

OFFERING/ANTHEM

Down to the River to Pray

arr. Sheldon Curry

PASTORAL PRAYER and LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

Standing in the Need of Prayer

#519

**Not my brother, nor my sister, but it’s me, O God, standing in the need of prayer;
Not my brother, nor my sister, but it’s me, O God, standing in the need of prayer.**

Refrain **It’s me, it’s me, it’s me, O God standing in the need of prayer;
It’s me, it’s me, it’s me, O God standing in the need of prayer.**

**Not the preacher, nor the deacon, but it’s me, O God, standing in the need of prayer;
Not the preacher, not the deacon, but it’s me, O God, standing in the need of prayer.**

Refrain

**Not my father, nor my mother, but it’s me, O God, standing in need of prayer;
Not my father, nor my mother, but it’s me, O God standing in need of prayer. *Refrain***

**Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it’s me, O God standing in need of prayer;
Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it’s me, O God standing in need of prayer. *Refrain***

BENEDICTION

CHORAL POSTLUDE

Kittery “Our Father”

William Billings

William Billings, (1746-1800) an important figure in early American music, is cited as the “inventor” of the fuguing tune. This form was quite popular in New England congregations.

Kittery, a paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer was first published in New Haven in 1783.

2023 flower chart is now available!! Please consider giving altar flowers for an upcoming Sunday. You can call Sherry in the church office. Thank you!!

It is me standing in the need of prayer ~ Tuesdays in February

You are invited to pay attention to and set an intention toward prayer. **Tuesdays in February (14, 21, and 28) at 1 pm in the Oasis Center and zoom**, this is an opportunity to both be in prayer and talk about prayer. The sessions will be recorded and posted to YouTube/Facebook so you can watch when convenient. In this month, as we celebrate Valentine's Day, the gift of God's love would be sweeter than chocolate, more abundant than those heart-shaped hard candies, and remind each of us that you are named and known by God as "Beloved". Please contact Pastor Wes for the Zoom link.

The UCC Men's breakfast series continues Saturday, February 18! Past moderators, Jim Butterworth and Dick Miller invite **all the men** of the congregation, new and longtime members, to join them for breakfast in Syster Hall. Coffee will be on at 8 am and breakfast served (courtesy of chef Dale Moore) at 8:30 am. We will enjoy fellowship together and hear a short presentation by Dale Woodling, a board member with the local Salvation Army, about the good work which this organization does in our community. (A free will offering will be taken to cover breakfast costs.) **You may register by Thursday, February 16 by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044.** We hope to see you there!

Choral Artist in Residence ~ Sunday, February 19 both services at 9 and 11 am

Our choir is excited about working with **Dr. Eric Nelson**, Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Emory University the weekend of February 18 & 19. Dr. Nelson is also the Conductor and Artistic Director of the internationally acclaimed Atlanta Master Chorale. On Sunday, February 19th, Dr. Nelson will lead our worship in a **Festival of Hymns** including five of his own creative hymn arrangements such as *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* and *How Great Thou Art*. This special choral Sunday will be accompanied by **guest musicians including a Brass Quintet, flute, and cello**. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

Please note your 2022 contribution statement has gone out via email or USPS to you (depending on your preferred communication style). If you have NOT received your statement from last year, please contact the church office. With gratitude for YOUR generosity.

February 22 ~ Ash Wednesday ~ two different opportunities for worship

- **Noon** ~ Join us in the chapel for a time of quiet meditation. There will be prayer tables with a reading for you to ponder; you can light a candle; and center yourself as we begin the season of Lent. At 12:30 p.m., Pastor Wes will offer a short liturgy and ashes to anyone who wishes. (Note, this is a new opportunity).
- **5:30 p.m.** ~ Pancakes (Syster Hall) ~ Join us for our traditional pancake meal before worship.
- **6:30 p.m.** ~ Service ~ Join us for our traditional Ash Wednesday service in the **sanctuary and online**. Pastor Wes will preach, our choir will sing, ashes available for your forehead or back-of-your-hand, and we will open our hearts to begin the season of Lent.

FEAST ~ Friends Eating and Studying Together~
Thursdays in March (2, 9, 16, and 23) from 10:30 am to noon

Your Spiritual Education and Growth Team invites you to “A Taste of the Oasis Center”. Offerings will be announced next week. As of now we know our Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR) will be offering four amazing sessions and our Artful Prayer group will guide you in ways that nourish and nurture your soul during these weeks. Please put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend a FEAST for the soul in March.

Finally! Coming up in March - the long postponed First Congregational UCC **Chili Cook-Off!** We are recruiting Chili Chefs to offer your best batch chili on **Sunday, March 26, at 12:15 in Syster Hall**. The congregation will vote on their favorite, and the winner will receive a modest prize and lots of praise! If you would like to participate as a chef, please contact Sandy Smith.

Calendar:

Sunday, February 12

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary
Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online
COLLAGE lunch, noon, Syster Hall

Monday, February 13

Library/Resource Center Meeting, 11 am, Library
Major Expense meeting, 2:30 pm, Zoom

Tuesday, February 14

Prayer Session, 1 pm, Oasis Center and Zoom (will be recorded)
Spiritual Education and Growth Team, 2 pm, Oasis Center and Zoom
Peace and Justice Team, 3 pm, Zoom
Bible Study, 6:30 pm, Zoom

Wednesday, February 15

Security Team meeting, 9:30 am, Oasis Center and Zoom
Bible Study, 11 am, Hybrid ~ Oasis Center and Zoom
Worship Team meeting, 1 pm, Zoom
Sacred Conversation on Race, 3 pm, Zoom
Choir, 7 pm, Chapel

Thursday, February 16

Green Team, 10 am, Oasis Center and Zoom
Mission Team, 1 pm, Oasis Center
Budget, Finance, and Stewardship, 3 pm, Zoom

Sunday, February 19 ~ Artist-in-Residence Weekend

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary
Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online
Fellowship Time, noon, Syster Hall