

Sing praises
to our **GOD,**



and give thanks
to God's holy name.

PSALM 30:4, NRSV

February 19, 2023

Artist in Residence

9 and 11 a.m.

Flowers given by **Kathie Stewart**, in loving memory of **James Keller Stewart**

PRELUDE/ANTHEM

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

arr. Eric Nelson

INVITATION to WORSHIP

written by Don Saliers

*OPENING HYMN

When in Our Music Is Glorified

When in our music God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride, It is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia! Alleluia!

So has the church, in liturgy and song, in faith and love, through centuries of wrong, Borne witness to the truth in every tongue: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise! Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise! And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia! Alleluia!

*OPENING PRAYER

Composer and Conductor of our lives, we come to You this morning with hearts that are open. We come to join in the unfolding and unfinished symphony of our lives. We come to take our place in the choir of our common life together as a church. For music that feeds and fuels our lives, thank you. For hymns we know by heart and new music that we

cannot shake from singing all week long, thank you. For Your melody first heard in creation when the breeze gently rustles through trees, waves crash rhythmically on the shore, and birds sing and serenade us, thank you. Open our ears, senses, souls, and whole lives to be caught up in this holy moment. Alleluia and Amen.

ANTHEM *For the Beauty of the Earth* arr. Nelson

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE Matthew 6:19-21
¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

HOMILY *Rhythm of Life*

ANTHEM *What Does the Lord Require* arr. Nelson

POEM *Singing the Story* by Susan Palo Cherwin

ANTHEM *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* arr. Nelson

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.

POSTLUDE/ANTHEM: *How Great Thou Art* arr. Nelson

We warmly welcome our instrumentalists: Betsy Hudson-Traba, flute; Nadine Trudel, cello; Aaron Romm, trumpet; Gianluca Farini, trumpet; Kelsey Ross, horn; Brad Williams, trombone; and Aaron Tindall, tuba.

We warmly welcome our Artist-in-Residence: Dr. Eric Nelson. He is the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Atlanta Master Chorale, a chamber choir comprised of choral artists living and working in the greater Atlanta area. His deep love for the music of the church with its endless variety of tunes, texts, and styles, has led him to compose many works for the church choir. He is also Professor of Music at Emory University. He studied voice and organ at Houghton College and holds graduate degrees in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College (MM) and Indiana University (DM). His choirs have sung at numerous national and regional choral conventions. A frequent clinician for adult sacred music festivals, Eric also leads clinics for high schools and universities, and has directed numerous all-state and honor choirs. His music is also published by Augsburg, Colla Voce, and ECS Publishing. His choirs have preformed throughout the world, including London, Rome, Krakow, Berlin, Leipzig,

Prague, Moscow, Seoul, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Sydney Opera House. He and his wife, Susan, have lived in Atlanta since 1997.

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 (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 you that you are named and known by God as "Beloved". Please contact Pastor Wes for the Zoom link.

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.

CONTAGIOUS HOPE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON CLIMATE

February 25, 2023 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Speakers Event

The event features keynote speaker, **REV. BROOKS BERNDT**, Minister of Environmental Justice, United Church of Christ and noted author of *Cathedral on Fire*. He will speak about how people and organizations can effectively address climate change. His words will be practical and inspiring; he will also reference how people of color and the impoverished are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. Following will be a panel of local experts including: **Jeanne Dubi**, President of Sarasota Audubon Society; **Dr. Frank Alcock**, Professor of Political Science and Environmental Studies at New College; **Jerry Larson**, retired physics instructor who was instrumental in inspiring Congregational UCC of Punta Gorda to adopt solar power. A vegetarian lunch will be served after the speakers. Please make a reservation to Sarah Melcher or call the church office.

Join us for FEAST (Friends Eating and Studying Together) as we offer a Taste of the Oasis Center opportunities. Join us from **10:30 am to noon on March 2, 9, 16, and 23**. We begin in Syster Hall with refreshments at 10:30 am.

Artful Prayer ~ Looking for creative and fun ways to add to your prayer life? Join the Artful Prayer team (Brenda Robinson, Donna Papenhausen, Lindsey Huddleston, Dawn Swain, Cindy Woodling) for a variety of fun sessions. No art experience required, just a spirit to explore God's sacred presence in your life in new ways. All supplies provided. **This offering is hybrid, please contact the church office for the link.**

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ each week you will join others in discussion of important topics facing our community and country. Topics include: **March 2** - "Banning Dr Seuss? What?!?" **March 9** - "Honoring Advocacy" - a prayer by Pixie Lighthorse of the Choctaw

Nation **March 16** - "The lie that invented racism" - TED Talk by John Biewen **March 23** - "The difference between being "not racist" and antiracist" - TED Talk by Ibram Kendi. **This offering is hybrid, please contact the church office for the link.**

Gospel-ing Your Life ~ As part of the invitation to read the Gospels during Lent, join Pastor Wes each week to listen for how the good news of John, Matthew, Mark, and Luke shapes our stories and lives. **March 2** ~ Dwelling in the Word with John; **March 9** ~ Living the Word with Matthew; **March 16** ~ Learning the Word with Mark; **March 23** ~ Infused by the Word with Luke. **This event will be recorded and posted to our YouTube Channel.**

For the last year a Security Team has been working to make improvements on Sunday mornings to keep our campus safe. We want to stress that we have NOT received any threats, but want to be proactive to provide a safe place to worship. In December, a report was offered to the Church Council that we want to share with the whole church. On **March 5 following the 11 am worship, the Security Team will offer a presentation of findings to the congregation in Syster Hall.** This is an informational meeting but we encourage all members to attend.

New Member Session will be held in the Oasis Center on March 5th following the 11 am worship. We welcome all who are interested in knowing more about the church to please attend. Please RSVP by calling the church office.

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.

Come one, come all, to the Women's Association's lunch and program on Tuesday, March 7, at 11:30a.m. in Syster Hall. Our very own Steve Horowitz will tell us all about "Amazing Ancient Egypt." A former college professor, "Dr. Steve" will deliver Egyptian costume, Egyptian music, a PowerPoint show, and he says, "There will be audience participation." You will not want to miss this compelling program. Luncheon costs \$12. Sign up after either Sunday service or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

Sunday, February 19

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary
Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online
Fellowship Tim, noon, Syster Hall
Reading the Bible in a Year, 1 pm, Oasis and Zoom

Monday, February 20

Growing and Caring Meeting, noon, Oasis
Reading the Bible in a Year, 1 pm, Oasis and Zoom

Tuesday, February 21

Prayer Session, 1 pm, Oasis Center and Zoom (will be recorded)
Drumming as a Spiritual Practice, 3 pm
Church Council, 6:30 pm, Oasis Center & Zoom

Wednesday, February 22~ Ash Wednesday

Bible Study, 11 am, Hybrid ~ Oasis Center and Zoom

Chapel open for prayer, noon ~ Ashes available at 12:30 pm

Sacred Conversation on Race, 3 pm, Zoom

Pancake dinner, 5:30 pm, Syster Hall

Ash Wednesday, 6:30 pm, Sanctuary

Choir, 8 pm, Chapel

Thursday, February 23

Staffing Team, 3 pm, Zoom

Saturday, February 25

Contagious Hope Speaker, Rev. Brooks Berndt, 9:30 am

Sunday, February 26 ~ Rev. Brooks Berndt preaching

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Fellowship Time, noon, Syster Hall