



**Welcome to worship this morning!** We are delighted you are here and invite you to participate in all our Holy Week Services. If there is any way we can offer a warm welcome please contact the church office or Pastor Wes.

**Flowers given by:** Page and Carol McCloud

PRELUDE

*from Suite No. 3 Allemande*  
Andrew Warfield, Horn

J.S. Bach

**INVITATION to WORSHIP**

- One: From the very first Palm Sunday parade to today, one word has centered us,
- Many: Hosanna!**
- One: Contained in this one word, the seven letters, is both praise and prayer, that means, *save us!*
- Many: Hosanna!**
- One: This word evokes emotions of places in our life that need healing, revealing the truth that we need help in ways that cannot be answered from the first page of a Google results.

**Many:** *whisper softly*      **Hosanna, hosanna.**

**One:** So bring your full self to the beginning of our holiest week, where we will greet with anthems sweet the One who rides on, rides on in majesty right into our souls.

**Many:**      **Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna!**

\*OPENING HYMN

*Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*

#213

**“Hosanna, loud hosanna,” the little children sang;  
through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang;  
To Jesus who had blessed them close folded to his breast,  
the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.**

**From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd,  
the victory palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.  
To one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state,  
and glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey’s gait.**

**“Hosanna in the highest!” That an ancient song is ours.  
We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers:  
“Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice.  
Hosanna! In your presence forever we’ll rejoice!”**

OPENING PRAYER

**God, Your ways are not our ways. You chose a barn as a perfect place to be born amid the cobwebs and chaos of a census. You chose to be embodied in a human-size person of Jesus who healed, preached, laughed, fed the multitudes, said things that baffled us, and did things we don’t understand. You chose twelve disciples, who this week will betray, deny, and desert Jesus; not exactly the best public relations team. You chose a cross as a way of self-giving love, rather than power or privilege or positions. You chose to announce all of this by riding in on a donkey. We *don’t* get it, God. But perhaps the point is not to explain but to experience; not to articulate but encounter. Open us to the praise of this day, to the holy meal of Thursday, to the grief and sorrow of Friday, to the glorious proclamation next Sunday. Ride into our hearts this morning anew and afresh with grace and love. Hosanna and Amen.**

ANTHEM

*Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*

Eleanor Daley

PALM SUNDAY LITANY

written by John Ristow

**One:** Blessed is our Messiah who comes in the name of our Creator!

**Many:**      **Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One:** The One we have long awaited, our Liberator, has come.

**Many:**      **Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One:** Riding into Jerusalem, not on a mighty steed, but on a borrowed donkey.

**Many:**      **Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One:** The Peacemaker has come, the one who heals all wounds.

**Many:**      **Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One:** All that was promised, Christ has fulfilled.

**Many: Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One: We offer up our praise and thanksgiving.**

**Many: Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

**One: Blessed be our Redeemer who comes in the name of the Almighty.**

**Many: Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!**

#### ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.”

<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: <sup>5</sup> “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” <sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” <sup>10</sup> When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “*Who is this?*” <sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

#### SERMON

*Which Gospel?*

#### INVITATION to OFFERING

#### ANTHEM

*Hallelujah, from the Mount of Olives*

Ludwig van Beethoven

#### PASTORAL PRAYER and LORD’S PRAYER (SUNG)

**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

*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

#216

**All glory, laud and honor to you, O Christ we sing,  
to whom the lips of the children made sweet hosannas ring!  
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way;  
our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.**

**O Promised One of Israel, of David’s royal line,  
the one called “God’s beloved” of flesh and yet divine,  
To you before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.**

**As you received their praises, receive our prayers today,  
whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway.**

All glory, laud and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,  
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Ag Chríost an Síol (Christ is the Seed)*  
Andrew Warfield, Horn

O' Riada

## Announcements ~ Sunday, April 2, 2023

### **Bread for the World ~ Opportunities to Learn and Advocate**

On February 21, Church Council agreed that First Congregational UCC would become members of Bread for the World, a Christian organization that believes “we can end hunger in our lifetime”. Bread works to make this a reality through educating and equipping people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger in the U.S and around the world. **Today ~ April 2, after both services, there will be a meet and greet with Sandy Lindahl who works with Bread for the World.** She will talk about the intersection between hunger, climate change, and racial injustice. These gatherings will also be an opportunity to answer your questions.

Our COLLAGE (LGBTQ + Allies) group will meet on zoom on **Tuesday, April 11 and 25 at 11 am.** This is a wonderful chance to connect and catch up! There will be NO COLLAGE luncheon in April due to Easter. Community events for the LGBTQ Community ~ **Resist & Strategize Suncoast ~ Monday, April 3, 7-8 pm** at UU Church (3975 Fruitville Rd) for a community gather bringing together LGBTQ and allies of Sarasota finding ways to collaborate and work together. **Diversity Voices of Sarasota Concert** at Holley Hall (709 N Tamiami Trail) ~ **Saturday, April 22 at 3 pm**, cost is \$20.00 in advance. **AND ~ 25th Anniversary Purple Tie Celebration** at the Sarasota Art Museum (1001 S. Tamiami) ~ **Friday May 5 at 6:30.** Tickets for both concerts can be found at [www.diversitysarasota.org](http://www.diversitysarasota.org)

### **Holy Week 2023 ~ Continues:**

**Maundy Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm** in the sanctuary ~ We gather around the table with the disciples on the last night of Jesus' life to experience and encounter the Bread of Life. Members of the Worship Team will help lead our service and we will celebrate Holy Communion. This service will be livestreamed.

**Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at noon** in the sanctuary ~ Beneath the cross of Jesus we gather to open our hearts to the One who meets us in our pain. Our Chancel Choir will sing and this service will be livestreamed so you can watch at any time.

**Easter Sunday Celebration, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 and 11 am** ~ We gather to sing and share the gospel truth, Christ is risen, he is risen indeed, Alleluia!! We welcome a **brass quintet and choir at both services.** 11 am will be livestreamed. All are welcome and bring a friend.

***Practicing an Easter-Faith*** ~ How do we open our lives to the mystery of Easter? In April we will pause our regularly scheduled Bible Study sessions to engage the book, *Practicing Our Faith* edited by Dorothy Bass. You are invited on **Tuesday nights at 6:30 pm on Zoom** (April 11, 25 and May 2) **OR Wednesday mornings at 11 am** (April 12, 26, and May 3). Wednesday is hybrid either in the Oasis Center or Zoom. The chapters of this book will inspire and inform and open us to ways we might live in these days. All are welcome.

Come one, come all, to the UCC Women's lunch and program on **Tuesday, April 4, at 11:30 a.m. in Syster Hall**. We look forward to showcasing "Insights into Selby Gardens," presented by **Wendy Deming**, Chief Operating Officer of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens since July 2018. Wendy will speak about how Marie Selby chose Sarasota Bay for her home and tell us about her choice of trees and plants. She will also highlight their visions for the future. Luncheon costs \$12. Sign up after worship or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

***There is room in our Easter faith when our Good Fridays persist!!*** We will be hosting a **grief group starting on Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm in the Chapel (please note change in venue)**. This is an opportunity to share together, support one another, and offer God's love. This group is open to all whose hearts are heavy because grief takes many forms and faces. Please sign up by calling the church office.

**Artful Prayer, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm ~ Oasis Center or Zoom** ~ Join in creating Artful Prayer Doodles (or "tangles"). No art experience required. All supplies will be provided for the in-person session. If joining via Zoom, you will need: heavy paper or card stock cut into 4 inch squares, black pens (preferably non-smear Art Pens), soft pencil, Q-tips, optional colored pencils. Contact the church office for the zoom link.

**NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON APRIL 15** ~~ The UCC Men's breakfast series continues **Saturday, April 15** and all the men of the congregation, new and longtime members, are invited to join for breakfast in Syster Hall. Coffee will be on at 8 am and breakfast served at 8:30 am. A special breakfast is planned with enjoyable activities and good fellowship afterward. (A free will offering will be taken to cover breakfast costs.) You may register by **Thursday, April 13** by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

Among the not-so-great realities of giving up driving, either voluntarily or required, is the inability to get where you want to go. Coming to First Congregational on Sunday has been a ritual for many of our members, yet they no longer have the means to get to church. We are looking for volunteers who might be willing, not necessarily every Sunday, to offer a welcoming ride to church. Some of you are already doing this and you know how much it means to both of you. If you believe this is something you are being called to do, please let the church office know. We are hopeful we can match you with someone who lives nearby. As is sometimes said, the road to a friend's house is always on the way. The Growing & Caring Team

## Calendar:

### Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Fellowship with **Sandy Lindahl**, 10 am, Syster Hall

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Fellowship with **Sandy Lindahl**, noon, Syster Hall

### Monday, April 3

Facilities and Grounds, 10 am, Oasis Center and Zoom

Racial Justice Mission Group, 11:00 am, Zoom

### Wednesday, April 5

Lay Visitation Ministry, 10 am, Chapel

Choir, 7 pm, Chapel

### Thursday, April 6

**Maundy Thursday Service, 7 pm, sanctuary and livestream**

### Friday, April 7

**Good Friday Service, noon, sanctuary and livestream**

### Sunday, April 9 ~ Easter Sunday Celebration

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

The service to celebrate the life of **Joan Byrd** will be **April 15th 11 am to 1 pm** at the University Park Country Club.