



March 5, 2023

11 a.m.

Flowers given by **Grace Ann** and **Scott Mosher**, in loving memory of husband & father,
Paul R. Mosher

PRELUDE

Aria on a Chaconne

Joel Martinson

INVITATION to WORSHIP

Lenten Poem

by Ann Weems

*OPENING HYMN

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

#18

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this baren land; I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow. Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield, ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.

*OPENING PRAYER

Nourishing and nurturing God, in the beginning, You were a seamstress sewing clothes for our ancestors Adam and Eve; in the wilderness You offered manna to our mumbling and grumbling wandering ancestors; You were door dash to Elijah giving him water and drink as he sulked under a bush afraid for his life; and in Jesus, You, took a meager amount of food ~ five small loaves and two minnows ~ turning that into a feast for more

than five thousand. Meet us, O God, in this moment for our hearts are hungry for good news. Feed us, O God, in this time for too often we turn to the cotton candy gospels of the world around us. Hold us, O God, for too often we can forget the truth of worship amid all the voices that clamor for our attention and allegiance.

Pause to let these words sink and settle.

Holy One, we are not the “we” You call us to be. Yet, Your love is unconditional and grace unceasing. Let this truth settle into our lives and guide our words, actions, decisions, and direction we go every day. In the name of the One who calls us to come to the table of grace, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*SUNG RESPONSE

Break New the Bread of Life

#321

**Break now the bread of life, Savior to me, as you once broke the loaves beside the sea:
Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord; my spirit yearns for you, O Living Word.**

**Bless now the truth, dear Christ, to me, to me, as you once blessed the bread by Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease, all shackles fall, and I shall find my peace, my all in all.**

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

SERMON

The Wilderness of Today

OFFERING/ANTHEM

Agnus Dei, Lamb of God

Wayne Wold

HOLY COMMUNION

One: May the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of life surround you;

Many: May the holy hover around you;

One: Open now to the One who is closer than your next breath;

Many: We fling open our lives to the One who crafts us and calls us, “Beloved.”

One: In this holy moment we taste God’s promise of grace in bread and juice,

Many: And we are caught up in a symphony of sacred song.

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.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

*CLOSING HYMN

As We Gather at Your Table

#332

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word, help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred. Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own; teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.

Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life; send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife. Give us, Christ your great compassion to forgive as you forgave; may we still behold your image in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least. There no more will envy bind us nor will pride our peace destroy, as we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

from Concerto No. 2 in a minor, Allegro
Hoang Pham, organist

J. S. Bach

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 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 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 ~ has been postponed due to sign ups. Please see Pastor Wes's Morning Meditations to go along with reading the Gospels during Lent.

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.

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.

You are invited to **The 27th Annual Choir Festival, Sunday, March 5 at 4:00 at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church** (6135 Beechwood Ave, Sarasota), under the direction of Jane Hunder. Many of our choir members are participating, along with singers from 9 other area churches. The concert is free.

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.

Orchard Place of Sarasota was founded by our church in 1993. Several of our members serve on the Board of Directors. This 40-unit affordable housing where the average rent is \$250 as many of the residents live on \$1000 or less a month. **They need toiletries: shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, as well as DVDs, books, and puzzles. Please bring your items to donate next Sunday, March 5.**

NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON MARCH 18

The UCC Men's breakfast series continues on Saturday, March 18 and all the men of the congregation, new and longtime members, are invited to join for breakfast in Syster Hall then. Coffee will be on at 8 am and breakfast served at 8:30 am. We will enjoy fellowship together and hear a presentation from **Barbara Richards, Executive Director, about Project 180** which assists those leaving incarceration to transition back to daily life. Barbara's office is located on our FCUCC campus and she will share with us 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, March 16 by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

Ready Readers will meet on **Thursday, March 9, at noon in the Oasis Center.** We will be discussing *The Love of My Life* by Rosie Walsh.

Coming up in March - the First annual (??) First Congregational UCC Chili Cook-Off! Our congregation's finest chili chefs will offer their best batch on **Sunday, March 29, at 12:15 in**

Syster Hall. Vote for your favorite, and the winner will receive a modest prize and heaps of praise! All are invited. See you there. *Ole!*

Do you want to be supportive of LGBTQ+ people having the ability to live safely as God made them with their Civil rights intact? Here's a chance for you to be of help. All FCUCC people welcome.

1. Help needed to take the COLLAGE tent and Banners to Pride and set it all up. Maybe 3-4 able people. See the sign-up sheets in the Narthex or Syster Hall.
2. Volunteers are needed to represent our Church's extravagant welcome. Enjoy a lovely day (usually) on the Manatee River waterfront meeting folks who stop by for info, candy, stickers or whatever can we offer. If you bring candy be sure it will not melt. Do bring water, sun protection and money to visit the many vendors.

Event: Manatee Pride

Date: Saturday, March 11th

Time: Set up at 10AM, Take down after 5 pm ~~ Pride event 12PM - 5PM

Location: Riverwalk Pavilion & Event Area (452 3rd Ave. W, Bradenton, FL 34205)

Calendar:

Sunday, March 5

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Fellowship Time – Birthday Sunday, noon, Syster Hall

Monday, March 6

Facilities and Grounds, Oasis & Zoom, 10 am

Racial Justice Mission Group, 11:30 am

Tuesday, March 7

UCC Women Luncheon, 11:30 am, Syster Hall

Tuesday Night Bible Study, 6:30, Zoom

Wednesday, March 8

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

Choir, 7 pm, Chapel

Thursday, March 9

FEAST, 10:30 am, see front page for offerings

Ready Readers, noon, Oasis Center

Sunday, March 12 ~ SPRING FORWARD!!!!

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

COLLAGE, noon, Syster Hall

