

*Easter Sunday*  
*April 9, 2023*  
*9 & 11 a.m.*



*Easter Blessings*

PRELUDE

*Solemn Entry*

Richard Strauss

Gianluca Farina and Ronald Romm, Trumpets; Andrew Warfield horn; Brad Williams, trombone; Angel DeArmas, Tuba; Marcelina Suchocha, percussion

CHORAL INTROIT

*He Is Risen, Hallelujah!*

G. Young

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: With the fragrance of lilies dancing in the air and bright brass stirring our souls, we sing out for all to hear,

Many: ***Christ is risen! Alleluia!***

One: And in those four words, we preach and proclaim God's presence that renews, restores, and redeems all of life!

Many: ***Christ is risen! Alleluia!***

One: For the One who was born in a barn, springs forth from the tomb with good news and Gospel joy that transforms our lives.

Many: ***Christ is risen! Alleluia!***

\*OPENING HYMN

*Fanfare and Hymn for Easter*

arr. Paul Sjolund

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!  
Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, ye heav'ns and earth reply: Alleluia!**

**Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!  
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
Once He died, our souls to save, Alleluia!  
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!**

**Loves redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids Him rise, Alleluia!  
Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!**

**Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!  
Praise eternal as His love, Alleluia!  
Praise Him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**God, in the holy mystery of this morning, meet us. Like Mary, we come searching prayerfully. In moments of despair, we long to be surprised by the Sacred. And we wonder if all we hear today is really true and can be trusted? Afterall, God, have You read the paper or been on Twitter? Each person here brings experiences of encountering stone-cold tombs. We pray, O God, for You to roll away the stones of grief that weigh heavy in our hearts. Resurrecting One roll away stones of exclusion that unjustly push**

**Your beloved to fringe. Roll away, Holy One, stones of division, distrust, and dismay that are persistent obstacles in our world. Meet us, O God, as You met Mary centuries ago. Fill us with the promise that what is possible comes from the *least* likely place in the world: a tomb where Your emphatic, “Yes” to life still echoes around us. Alleluia and Amen.**

**\*SUNG RESPONSE**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below.  
Praise God above you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (*Repeat*)**

**Alleluia, sing praises to the Lamb, Alleluia, Gloria!  
Alleluia, we worship and adore; Alleluia to the Lord! (*Repeat*)**

**ENGAGING SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” <sup>8</sup> So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

**ANTHEM**

*My Master From a Garden Rose*

Eleanor Daley

*My Master in a garden lay, perfumed with spices rare, for tender hands had laid Him there to rest amid the roses. 'Twas on a cross they laid Him bare, and pierced His hands with nails, that we poor men might live again and be with Him in glory. Alleluia, Alleluia. My Master from a garden rose to go for us to heav'n, and He will come and take us there, to be with Him, to be with Him, to be with him forever. Alleluia, Alleluia.*

**SERMON**

This Gospel!

**INVITATION to OFFERING**

*Please note there are colorful Easter envelopes that will go to support our Love Offering to organizations nationally and internationally. The white envelopes support the mission and ministry of First Congregational UCC and all we do locally to share God's love.*

**ANTHEM**

*Christ the Lord is Risen Again*

Philip Stopford

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

*Thine is the Glory*

**Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;  
Endless is the victory you o'er death have won.  
Angels clothed in radiance rolled the stone away;  
Conquered is the grave in which your body lay.**

*Refrain: Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son;  
Endless is the victory, Thou o'er death has won!*

**See, it is Jesus, Jesus has appeared;  
Do not doubt at all for nothing you will fear.  
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing;  
Tell it without ceasing: death has lost its sting. *Refrain***

**Am I still frightened? One whom I adore,  
Jesus, lives again, gives peace for evermore.  
Jesus is my victory, life and strength and Head;  
Jesus is my glory, nothing shall I dread. *Refrain***

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Marche Triomphale*

Sigfrid Karg-Elert

Gianluca Farina and Ronald Romm, Trumpets; Andrew Warfield horn; Brad Williams, trombone; Angel DeArmas, Tuba; Marcelina Suchocha, percussion

Greeters: Chuck Jarman and Phil Swain (9 am)  
Gib & Jeannie Mitchell; Chris Cooper; Lindsey Huddleston (11 am)  
Liturgist: Jim Butterworth  
Bus Driver: Page McCloud

**On** behalf of the Staff and Leadership of First Congregational UCC ~ we pray for **God's love to enfold and hold** you this Easter Season. You are always welcome here and hope you will find this church to be a safe space where your faith can grow. May you have peace, healing, strength, and love every day. **Blessings and God's love!**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2023

**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. **Please RSVP with Pastor Wes today** ~ all are welcome.

**Grief Group** ~ 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 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.

**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!

**COLLAGE (LGBTQ + Allies News** ~ 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! **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.** For tickets: [www.diversitysarasota.org](http://www.diversitysarasota.org)

**Can You Offer a Ride?** 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*

**Sacred Conversations on Race** ~ Over the last three years, this group has been meeting weekly having holy and hard conversations about race. Moving forward, Sacred Conversations on Race will meet **every other week.** **The group will remain hybrid ~ in person in the Oasis Center**

**OR on Zoom at 3 pm every other Wednesday.** Upcoming Topics: **April 12:** “Racism Has a Cost for Everyone” - a TED TALK by Heather C McGhee; **April 26:** “White Supremacy: Same Dog, Same Tricks - Time to Change the Training” - a TED TALK by Russell Ellis.

**Hazing Film to be Shown** ~ Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center in Sarasota will show, *Hazing*, a film by **Byron Hurt, son-in-law of Priscilla and Jim Crumel, on April 18 at 6 pm.** The admission for April 18 is free, but you do need to RSVP go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/screening-of-hazing-documentary-tickets-559849624297>

**SURE News** ~ (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity) ~ A “Justice Gathering” has been scheduled for **April 24 at 6:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, 2050 Oak Street in Sarasota.** SURE continues to actively work on Affordable Housing, Mental Health, Restorative Practices and Criminal Justice issues.

**Core Values Discussion, April 30** ~ The current set of Core Values has guided our congregation for over a decade. Since that time, we have received many new members who are now on Leadership Teams. This year we are reflecting and discussing our Core Values, Mission, and Vision Statement. We want to hear from YOU!! **After the 11 am. service on April 30, you will have a chance to share your reflections during fellowship time.** If you are not able to attend this conversation, please see Pastor Wes or Nancy Morris. In the coming months, a small working group will be wordsmithing the Core Values, then seeing how these changes might impact our wording in the Vision and Mission Statements. Here are our current Core Values:

- Worship is at the heart of what we do and who we are.
- We are an inclusive community and love each other, not despite our differences, but because of them.
- We are grounded in Sarasota reaching out beyond our walls to neighbors near and far in service.
- We strive to offer an extravagant welcome to all.
- We strive to respect each other in our diversity.
- We are a joyful covenant partner with the United Church of Christ.

## CALENDAR

### Sunday, April 9 ~ Christ is Risen ~ Easter Sunday

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Fellowship, noon, Syster Hall

### Monday, April 10

Library Committee, 11 am, Syster Hall

### Tuesday, April 11

COLLAGE (LGBTQ+ allies), 11 am, Zoom

Spiritual Education and Growth, 2 pm, Hybrid ~ Oasis and Zoom

Tuesday Study of *Practicing Our Faith*, 6:30 pm, Zoom

### Wednesday, April 12

Wednesday Study of *Practicing Our Faith*, 11 am, Hybrid, Oasis and Zoom

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3:00 pm, Hybrid, Oasis and Zoom

Choir, 7 pm, Chapel

**Thursday, April 13**

Artful Prayer, 2 pm, Hybrid, Oasis and Zoom

Finance Meeting, 3 pm, Zoom

Grief Group, 4 pm, Chapel

**Saturday, April 15**

**Service for Joan Byrd, 11 am, Palm Aire Country Club**

**Sunday, April 16 ~ Endowment Sunday**

Sunday Worship, 9 am, sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Fellowship Time, noon, Syster Hall

*We encourage you to subscribe to the weekly **Midweek Message** via your email  
to keep connected with activities in the church.*