



First Congregational UCC

*“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing
and right doing there is a field.
I’ll meet you there.*

*When the soul lies down in that grass the
world is too full to talk about.” – Rumi*

~ Silence & Stillness ~

Rumi’s words open us to a different way of being. So often we want to compartmentalize and categorize the world (and people) into right and wrong. We are caught in cycles of binary thinking. Rumi encourages us to a space and place beyond that way; he calls this a field ~ a wide-open field ~ an expansive and expanding field. There our souls lie down (note the echo of Psalm 23), where the world is too full to talk about. There is silence and stillness. We realize the truth is there is too much for us to comprehend or control ~ mentally, emotionally, relationally, and physically.

When I hear Rumi’s words, I remember in the summertime being bored, laying in the grass, watching the clouds go by. Laying in the grass connecting the soil in my soul to the earth from which all of us are crafted. Laying in the grass staring at the sky reminded me of the vastness of the world and the smallness when I felt an ant crawling on my leg. Laying in the grass provoked and evoked within me a peacefulness that was more a gift and not about my own correctness or competency. Those summer days not concerned about what time it was and being unproductive were a blessing.

Office Hours

Pastor Wes:

Mon.-Thurs.: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sherry Glover:

Mon.-Tues.: 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wed.-Thurs.: 10:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Mark:

Mon. - Fri.: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Greg:

Tues. - Sat.: various hours



- **Worship ~ 9 a.m.** in the sanctuary.
- **Worship ~ 11:00 a.m. in person in the Sanctuary and livestreamed** on Facebook, YouTube and our website.

Pastor Wes Vacation Days:

June 14 – June 20

August 7 – August 13

October 2 – October 8

I think Rumi is inviting us into stillness and silence. What comes into your mind when you hear the word, “Silence”? Silence can mean quiet, calm, and slowing down. Silence can mean loneliness and an unsettling stillness or even restlessness. ***When have you experienced quiet in a holy way?*** When has silence been uncomfortable? Sometimes silence can be hurtful or unwelcome. Sometimes we need silence and stillness and other times we can feel silenced by another’s comments. Beyond binary thinking, both are true.

Maybe you have heard that the same letters are used to spell “silent” **and** “listen”. Maybe you have heard the quote, “God’s first language is silence. Everything else is a translation.” which is attributed to Thomas Keating who is a leader in contemplative prayer. Maybe you’ve read Mother Teresa of Calcutta who wrote, “We cannot find God in noise or agitation. Nature: trees, and grass grow in silence. The stars, the moon, the sun move in silence.”

This June, I invite us to begin the season of summer with moments of stillness and silence. Up front I want to say that my intention here is **NOT** to make you a monk or nun or levitate five inches off the ground. I am not trying to sell you something or guarantee that you will have a spiritually enlightened experience that transforms your life. There are times when meditation and centering prayer for five minutes can bring calm amid the storms of life. And times when for all five minutes you will feel seasick from the perpetual motion of life. What I am encouraging right now is for you to take five minutes. To go out into the field or at least outside. Venture beyond all the “shoulds” and notifications dinging on your phone/computer and the voices gnashing their terrible teeth trying to tell you that you are losing on some imaginary scoreboard. ***Go and be*** ~ and you don’t have to lie down in the grass...but take a chair and sit by a tree. Or you can stand barefoot in the grass or go to the beach to let the waves kiss your toes.

Beginning the week of May 29th, my Morning Meditations will invite you into summer stillness. The wonderful part of this is you can do this wherever you are. You don’t need some special, set aside space; you need to be where you are in that moment. It is my prayer that amid the busyness and fullness of our lives, we will find sacred pauses every day to sit and be embraced/held by the one who calls us “Beloved”.

With God’s love ~ *Wes*

COLLECT WATER ~ As you travel this summer, **please collect water from wherever you visit!** Remember, you can gather water from local Florida areas or exotic/exciting places like Iowa!

We will have a gathering of the waters on October 29th, and we need **YOUR** help.



Worship

8:45 a.m. ~ In the Chapel ~ Half hour service with a blending of hymns, scripture, reflection, and interaction all in the beautiful intimacy of the chapel.

11 a.m. ~ In the Sanctuary featuring our chancel choir,
& Livestreamed (*Facebook, YouTube, Website*)



June 4 ~ Communion Sunday ~ We continue Paul's Greatest Hits by focusing on 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 and 3 (selected verses). **Wear orange.**

June 11 ~ PRIDE SUNDAY ~ Members of our COLLAGE group will help lead the service. Pastor Wes will preach on 1 Corinthians 12.



June 18 ~ Father's Day (Pastor Wes on Vacation) ~ Rev. Ellen Marsey will preach on this day before **Juneteenth**.

June 25 ~ We wrap up our study of 1 Corinthians, with Paul's famous words about love in Chapter 13.

July 2 ~ ONE Service at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary ~ Holy Communion will be celebrated. Pastor Wes will preach on 2 Corinthians 4.

State Florida UCC Women's Conference Selects Nancy Morris ~ Lay Woman of the Year 2023

Among the requirements for consideration for this honor is "one who serves through faith and actions and demonstrates the true meaning of being a Christian." Nancy is all that and much more!

Nancy was nominated by a group of her peers who have witnessed all that Nancy does for our congregation. She joined First Congregational UCC in January 1991, and since has shared her time and talents in many ways. She has been described as a "light" for our congregation and one who welcomes and provides guidance and leadership by example. If she is not working in the choir to keep the music library in order or making coffee and helping with fellowship offerings in Syster Hall, she is helping in the office or wherever there is a need.



Nancy is currently our Moderator which means a three-year commitment to attend committee meetings, chair council and be a listening ear and sounding board for Pastor Wes. We are blessed by Nancy and honored to be led by this kind and humble servant. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

The History of our Beautiful Cross
By Carol Seltzer
(Assisted by Kathi Taylor & Greg Chestnut)

In October of 1993 the new pipe organ, built by Dan Jaeckel, was installed. Decisions were made at that time to re-design the Chancel area of the sanctuary by an Esthetic committee led by Kathi Taylor, a local artist, and Greg Chestnut.

They enlisted Norman Hervieux, Head of the Design Department of Ringling School of the Arts and Design. Norman is now a member of our congregation. His design included a cross located in the "Center of Your Field of Vision" and he was explicit about the size and placement of the cross. It was to be the same width of the center pipe and placed directly in line with that pipe. A subtle design feature suggested by Norman was to bevel the edges and to place a halogen spotlight above it.

The design for the entire area was inspired by nature, and leaves were incorporated at the top of the organ pipes. Dr. John Syster, pastor at that time, loved a milkweed garden that attracted butterflies and so the leaves at the top of the organ pipes are milkweed.

The committee also engaged Pedro Cobian, a famous Sarasota artist/sculptor, who submitted several cross designs, but the committee did not think any of them were "right" for us.

Kathi Taylor was at a loss for an idea that night. She prayed: *God, what would you like on this cross?* And just in front of her was her live and growing pathos plant. She made a cross out of cardboard and attached the leafy vine from the pathos plant. It represented that **Christ is the vine and we are the branches.** (John 15:5). "This is a good vision/core value for our church. We have many branches (various passions and perspectives on faith) in our church, but we are all connected to a vine of faith, love, and Christ together." ~ Pastor Wes



Kathi Taylor

When Kathi presented her idea, the committee immediately knew it was the right design. Kathi worked diligently with Pedro Cobian to create the perfect silver cross with seven bronze leaves—one of the leaves is on the back to inspire the choir.

Then, in February 1994, after much work and collaboration, our beautiful cross was dedicated.

**Join the
Zoom Conversations**



COLLAGE 2nd & 4th Tuesdays @ 11 a.m. ~ Collage is our LGBTQ and Ally Group. All are welcome to join our Collage group on Zoom for support and faithful discussion.

Tuesday Bible Study @ 6:30 p.m. ~ We meet on Zoom to discuss the Bible passage for the upcoming Sunday.

Wednesday Bible Study @ 11 a.m. ~ **HYBRID** in the Oasis Center to discuss the Bible passage for the upcoming Sunday.

SCOR (Sacred Conversations on Race) 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @ 3 p.m. ~ **HYBRID** in the Oasis Center.

***Zoom links available
through Pastor Wes***



Add Your Voice to Important Issues



The Peace and Justice Network maintains a list of email addresses of our church members who would like to add their voices on key issues, such as Gun Safety, Voting Rights, Equality, Racial Justice, upcoming State and Federal legislation, and other current topics. Our focus is providing an easy link to weigh in on issues important to YOU – you never have to vote, call, or write unless you wish to do so. We provide the links and a brief description; you decide if you are called to act. We strive to be non-political.

Recent notices have involved actions to advocate against Florida's permitless carry legislation, a petition supporting clean water legislation, information on specific Sarasota School Board meetings and New College rallies, etc.

Interested? Email your contact information to either Lee Brockmann (fredleebrock@aol.com) or Wes Curry (jowescurry@verizon.net).

Joyful Mission News

We have a joyful update on the Easter Love Offering. The week after Easter we had received \$13,245 and by the end of April that grew to almost \$16,000.

Thank you so much for your generosity.



From our three big mission projects this past year (Christmas Love, Easter Love and Alta Vista School) our congregation donated **\$37,000.**

These funds support both our local organizations as well as those that make a difference around the world. Because of you, we have been able to donate to 24 mission-minded organizations! We are grateful for all of you.

With grateful hearts,

*Your UCC Mission Team ~ Jan Andersen, Jan Kamm,
Gretchen Friend-Jones, Terri Crawford, and Nancy Taylor*

With Gratitude



Sue Fields has resigned as our Business Manager so she can fully enjoy retirement. Sue will continue to serve on our Finance Team as a valued member, and she will stay on as paid staff to assist in the transition.

We are grateful to Sue who shared her talents in Human Resources—helping Robin Reich craft our Financial Guidelines, develop our 2023 budget, and countless other tasks over the last 1 ½ years. We thank you!



A safe place to find strength & hope through the sharing & support of other grieving LGBTQ+ individuals.

Not a therapy group, but an open discussion with others suffering the loss of someone close to them, whether a spouse, partner, friend, or family member.

A twice monthly meeting to share, and to listen, & to find your voice.

Meetings will be at
First Congregational UCC
1031 S. Euclid Ave.
Sarasota, Fl 34237
For more information
Contact Cas @
casbgroup1234@gmail.com

Wear Orange on June 4th to Remember Victims of Gun Violence



Hadiya Pendleton was 15 years old, standing in a Chicago park, chatting with school friends a decade ago when she was shot and killed. She was not the intended target. The week before, she had performed at events for [President Obama's second inauguration](#), and Michelle Obama attended her funeral.

Hadiya's friends decided to wear orange after Hadiya's death to raise awareness about gun violence. One friend explained: "Orange is basically the color hunters wear to signal to other hunters not to shoot them. **So that's why we're wearing it — to say, 'Don't shoot me'.**"

Since then, activists throughout the country have worn orange on a day or a weekend in June to raise awareness about the pandemic of gun deaths in this country. So, get out your orange and wear it as often as possible anywhere you go from June 2nd through 4th.

Our church council has agreed, as it did last year, to designate a special **Wear Orange Day** to remember the many victims. We encourage you to wear orange in any form – a shirt, a dress, a tie, shoes, a hat, whatever you have – at services here on June 4th.

We also joined several organizations in requesting that the city and county commissions in Sarasota and Manatee approve their own proclamations for **Wear Orange Day**.

Wanted: Civil War Buff

If you have an interest in the Civil War, there are several items looking for a new home. For information: Contact Lee Brockmann fredleebrock@aol.com



Family Promise Update



Home for Good and **Francis House** are two current programs which our congregation supports. **Home for Good** serves families in their own homes by providing prevention, diversion, and stabilization. Since 2020, this program has served nearly 300 families and 600 children.

Though we lost our **Francis House** several months ago, we have secured a new home with a June opening date. **Francis House** serves homeless pregnant women that have other children in their care.

Family Promise is actively seeking a day center where we can house homeless families again.

There are many ways you can support these missions:

*Provide a meal
Do laundry*

*Visit with families and children
Respite care for a new mother*

*Help with homework
Other*



To re-open Francis House we need:

For babies: *baby wash/shampoo, microwave sterilizer bags for bottles, baby pacifiers, baby lotions/diaper rash crème, waterproof mattress pads (pack and play size), muslin swaddle blankets, bottle replacement nipples (Dr. Brown/Tommee tippy), baby layette sets, diapers (new-born or size one), Diaper Genie refill bags.*

For moms: *body wash, share sanitizer, disposable pads (36X36), hand/body lotion, nursing pads (washable), hair styling tools (dryer/curling iron), small flashlights/batteries.*

General supplies: *insect repellent, sunscreen (adult/child), laundry soap/bleach, paper towels, facial tissues, toilet paper, dishwasher soap/tabs, dish soap, kitchen/bath cleaners, Swiffer duster refills, light bulbs, tall garbage can liners.*



Monetary donations can be sent directly to Family Promise.

Visit familypromisesarasota.org and click donate or mail a check to:
Family Promise of Sarasota-Manatee
8499 S Tamiami Trail PMB 267
Sarasota, FL 34238

Contact Ellen Marsey or Dotty Reed to learn more about ways you can make a difference.

CREATION JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS



The Green Team has recently planted three young trees on our church grounds. In honor of Earth Day 2023, a Southern Magnolia was planted in the church's front yard on the north side and a Slash Pine on the south side. Both trees are native to Florida and will succeed a much older generation of trees already on campus.

In the church's backyard, a Marlberrry tree has been planted near the labyrinth and close to the butterfly garden. Marlberrry trees are native to Florida and love the shade, so they make wonderful "understory" trees. The flowers attract butterflies, and the berries are appreciated by the birds.

It is our hope that the addition of these trees will do more than just beautify the church grounds. Trees are beneficial to the environment in numerous ways. They help produce oxygen and filter out pollutants to clean the air. In addition, they also help preserve water levels in the soil. Trees provide shelter and nesting sites for many species of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.



Did you know that trees can also reduce the temperature in urban areas by providing shade, resulting in as much as an 18 degree drop in air temperature?

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT NEWS



SILVER PRIDE, June 10th ~ –COLLAGE will be hosting a table at the Sarasota Senior Center SILVER PRIDE reaching out to LGBTQ+ seniors and their Allies. The current politically hostile environment makes it more important than ever to get the word out that our church is welcoming to LGBTQ+ folks and their families.

COLLAGE LUNCHEON, June 11th ~ Mayomi Fowowe-Makinde, a gay man born and raised in Nigeria, had to go into hiding after being outed as gay. The police pursued him, as being a member of the LGBTQ+ Community is illegal in Nigeria and can result in 15 years in prison.



Mayomi is living a new life in America because of the help he received to get him out of Nigeria and into the United States. He has claimed asylum and has since become a nurse.

He is amazed at, and appreciative of, the freedom he has experienced as a gay man in America. He wants others to be aware and understand the tyranny LGBTQ+ people experience in other parts of the world and be warned against it happening in America.

*Mayomi Fowowe-
Makinde, Gay
Nigerian Man
Escaped Homophobia
to Build a New Life in
America*

Come to Syster Hall on PRIDE SUNDAY, June 11th after the 11:00 a.m. service to hear more of Mayomi's Journey.

Please sign up in advance in the Narthex if you want a box lunch, or email Dr. Sara Little at sarajlittle@me.com.

RACIAL JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS



Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR)

SCOR meets the **second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 3 p.m. (HYBRID) in person at the Oasis Center or on Zoom.**



June 14th ~ "A Conversation about Growing Up Black" and "A Conversation with White People on Race" ~ NY Times Op-Docs

June 28th ~ "The Danger of a Single Story" ~ TED TALK by Chimamamanda Ngozi Adichie

If you have any suggestions, please let Jim Crumel and Pastor Wes know. In the meantime, please know there is **ALWAYS** space and place for you to join in this conversation.

The History of Juneteenth

By David Wilkins



On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed into law making Juneteenth a national holiday. African American communities have celebrated Juneteenth for more than a century but, like so much of Black history, it was virtually unknown by most Americans. The Juneteenth story is important because it celebrates the emancipation of enslaved Africans illegally held in Texas after the passage of the 13th Amendment. It is also a good lesson on the importance of accurate storytelling. As we approach Juneteenth 2023, we confront backlash from those who do not want truthful history told or taught. Juneteenth tells an important American story and celebrates the remarkable people who made it possible. Their legacy deserves nothing less than accuracy and admiration.

The popular narrative begins with the arrival of Union General Gordon Granger and 1800 soldiers in Galveston, Texas, on June 18th, 1865, to announce General Order Number 3: "***The people are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them, become that between employer and hired labor...***"

Granger's order arrived two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, five months after the passage of the 13th Amendment and two months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The narrative would lead one to believe that enslaved Africans were unaware of national events. The enslaved knew about the War, the Proclamation, and the 13th Amendment. They were celebrating the fact that the presence of Granger's troops meant they could now exercise those rights.

At the outset of the War, enslaved Africans escaped to the Union lines whenever and wherever possible. Their ever-increasing numbers threatened to hinder Union war plans until the Department of the Army organized to employ them. As we learn in this quote from an enslaved man named Felix Haywood, this proximity was an information pipeline. "We knowed what was goin' on in the war all the time. We all felt like heroes, and nobody had made us that way but ourselves." Historian Jamelle Bouie expressed the point in these terms. "When secession turned to war, it was enslaved people who turned the narrow conflict over union into a revolutionary war for freedom." Who freed the slaves? The slaves freed the slaves." More than 200,000 freed and formerly enslaved Africans would serve and more than 40,000 of those would die fighting for freedom.

Juneteenth is indeed a day to celebrate and remember. Families will gather around good food and friends and pay homage to our ancestors. These words from historian Kate Mazur, are instructive. "To commemorate Juneteenth is to recognize the importance of slavery in U.S. history, to remember the horrors of bondage and the jubilation of freedom." Our truthful memory is a worthy offering.



Kings And Queens Bridge ~ June 12th

Kings and Queens Bridge will play on **Monday, June 12th @ 1 p.m.**

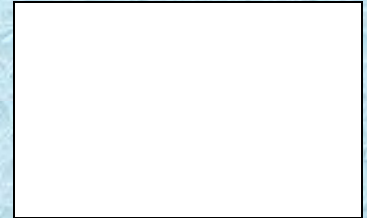
New players who like to play contract bridge are warmly welcomed. We meet the **second Monday of each month** if we have at least eight people able to play. Please call or email Ethel Rudy @ 941-727-0122 or loisrudy253@gmail.com.



Community Meal ~ June 27th

The monthly community meal that we continue to provide at St. Paul Lutheran Church feeds those who are hungry and in need of fellowship. Our guests are treated to a Sandy Smith home cooked meal. The home-baked items provided by our church family add a sweet treat that is heartily enjoyed. Our mission is to feed the hungry and offer fellowship to our guests.

Please volunteer with set-up/serving/clean-up functions at St. Paul's Fellowship Hall. We need your **home-baked items (brownies and frosted cakes—9x13 size)**. Please join us on **June 27th from 4-6:30 p.m.** Thank you for all you do for those in need. Volunteer and/or inquire for more details: Carol Hagglund at carol.hagglund@gmail.com



Ready Readers ~ June 8th

Thinking about joining a book club for the summer or the coming year? We meet on the **second Thursday of every month at noon in the Oasis Center.**



A list of suggested books from the Florida UCC Women's Reading for Renewal book club is available in the Syster Hall Library. We will be choosing which ones we would like to read for 2023-2024.

We welcome and encourage the participation and input of new members even if you are not able to attend every meeting. For more information and further updates, contact Sandy Smith at sandysmithvi@gmail.com or 340-227-5121.

For our June 8th meeting we will be discussing a children's book, *Sparrow's Prayer*, by Roger Hutchison.



When words are hard to find, prayer blooms in unexpected ways.

"Sparrow wakes each morning, ready to sing a prayer of thanksgiving. But not today. Today his words get tangled and knotted in his beak like old yarn and straw. He feels sad and gray, and he's not sure why.

So, Sparrow decides to ask his friends Turtle, Mousie, and Buck for advice on how to pray. Each friend shows Sparrow a different way to pray without words, through generosity, art, and movement. As the day ends, Sparrow meditates on a rose aglow in the evening light and has an epiphany: Every living thing does what God created them to do. Each life is, itself, a prayer of thanksgiving. Often, the most powerful prayers do not include words. Lyrical and unique, *Sparrow's Prayer* is a tale about an unexpected and life-changing encounter with the holy."

June Birthdays



6/1	Jim Butterworth	6/17	Alleyne Kess Shirley Mohr
6/3	Nancy Morris	6/19	Barbara Green Jon Metzger
6/4	Sallie Lutz	6/22	Kenneth Briggs Mary Lou Starcher
6/5	Sarah Mueller	6/23	Lee Smith
6/6	Jerry Long	6/27	Douglas Chismar Jack Mahoney David Wilkins
6/9	Jerry Oliver	6/28	Norman Hervieux
6/11	Carol Fields George Francis	6/29	Betty Dettery Jeff Sands
6/14	Peggye Mezile		
6/15	Lloyd Kalisak Sandy Plette		
6/16	Richard Wharton		

June Anniversaries



6/4	Allyn & Kay Jones
6/6	Bob & Christine Millar Gib & Jeannie Mitchell
6/7	David & Jean Kerrigan
6/12	Charles & Mary Jane Hamilton
6/14	Jeff & Judy Jones Gregory & Lorraine Matthews
6/16	William & Susan Moore
6/19	Jim & Priscilla Crumel
6/22	David & Karen Crane
6/23	Andre & Sandy Plette
6/24	Dale & Cindy Woodling
6/27	Sarah Melcher & Alleyne Kess
6/29	Mo and Jeanette Sherrill
6/30	Kenneth & Bonnie Briggs David & Laine Pitt

~ Card Shower ~

June 90+ Wise Birthdays

6/11 ~ Colonel USAF Ret. Francis George

Please let Sherry in the office know if you are going to be celebrating a 90+ Wise birthday.

IN LOVING
Memory

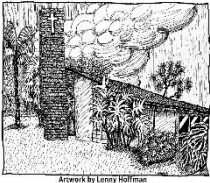


Gene Rump & Myron Robinson

"Jesus called upon us to love our neighbor and he expanded upon the definition to include all God's children."

Jim Butterworth





FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC CHURCH
 1031 Euclid Ave
 Sarasota, FL 34237
 www.uccsarasota.com



The 2023 Flower Chart is NOW ready for YOU! Do you have a special occasion coming up this year? Would you like to celebrate at an upcoming Sunday service?

Each Sunday, there is an opportunity for two bouquets.
The cost is \$40 per bouquet, payable to the church.

Please sign up for a Sunday by emailing admin@uccsarasota.com
 We are grateful for the fresh flowers every Sunday that bring the beauty of God's creation into our worship space.

STAFF

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 Minister of Music Gregory Chestnut
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 Vice Moderator..... Harold Mezile
 Past Moderator Jim Butterworth
 Co-treasurers Robin Reich & Dale Woodling
 Pastor EmeritusDr. John Syster
 Contributing Photographer Susan Moore
 Newsletter Carol McCloud, Lindsey Huddleston

***We are an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ
 in the Florida Conference of the UCC.***

Telephone: (941) 953-7044; Fax: (941) 952-5245

Email: office@uccsarasota.com; Website: www.uccsarasota.com

We are worshipping on-line via Livestream each week at 11 a. m. and the service is posted to our website for streaming by 1 p.m. each Sunday afternoon.

