

Flowers Given By: **Terri Crawford** and **Roxanne Schwoch**,
in memory of our father **John Schwoch**

PRELUDE

Hope

Yiruma, Korean pianist

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: When I opened my eyes this morning, there was excitement and enthusiasm,

Many: **This is the day God has made, let us, together, rejoice in it!**

One: From quiet moments alone in prayer to conversations of faith this week,

Many: **Now is the time we gather as one strong body with many voices.**

One: We give thanks to God who delights in diversity.

Many: **As Christ's community, we offer our prayer and praise.**

*OPENING HYMN

In Christ There is No East or West

#395

In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North; But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find; God's service is the golden cord close binding humankind.

In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free; For men and women live in God, and all are kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North; One joyous, true community throughout the whole wide earth.

OPENING PRAYER

God of community and connections that cause our hearts to feel strangely warmed.

Thank you for this moment to worship when our voices can blend together in harmony.

Thank you for a place where we can both share love *and* receive love. We give thanks as every person here is wonderfully made in Your image. We ask for courage every day to be a sacred and safe place for people to belong. We all bring the need to be accepted, affirmed, and appreciated with affection. Set our hearts ablaze to the holy work of being Your people in these days. Open our sacred imaginations, O God, that community will always be a colorful mess of Playdough where through prayer, play, and participation together we might make something of beauty for the sake of the world You love. Amen.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jane Delgado Semidei & Nate Snyder

SUNG RESPONSE

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; The sharing of a common life is like to that above.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Romans 14, *selected verses*

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently. For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault.

SERMON

ANTHEM

The Peace of God

John Rutter

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 *Help Us Accept Each Other*

#388

Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us; teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace. Be present, God, among us, and bring us to believe we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O God, your lessons, as in our daily life we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith. Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some, to love them as we find them, or as they may become.

Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved in living situations to do the truth in love; To practice our acceptance, until we know by heart the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.

God, for today's encounters with all who are in need, who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread, Bring us new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on; renew us with your Spirit; God! Free us, make us one!

*BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, May 21, 2023

You are cordially invited to a Graduation Celebration for Olivia Bixby in Syster Hall after worship on May 21st. The love of this church has shaped Olivia in so many ways. From Thursday Knights programs to Christmas pageants to Sunday School teachers ~ your presence has blessed her. We invite you to celebrate as Olivia graduates from Riverview High School. She will be attending Florida State University beginning in June (summer) 2023. Come and help us bless Olivia in her future endeavors.

On behalf of the Staffing Team, we want to let you know **Sue Fields** has resigned as our Business Manager so she can enjoy retirement and other opportunities. Sue will continue to serve on our Finance Team as well as help around the church. We are grateful to Sue for sharing her talents in Human Resources, helping Robin Reich to craft our Financial Guidelines, develop our 2023 budget, and countless other tasks over the last year and half. Moving forward, Staffing will be searching for someone to assist with counting offerings, overseeing intentions of giving, and helping with income to the church. If you are interested, or know someone, please see Pastor Wes or Dick Miller, chair of Staffing Team.

Pastor Wes will be on vacation **May 22nd through May 29th**. Please contact the church office if you have a pastoral concern.

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ The group will remain hybrid ~ in person in the Oasis Center OR on Zoom at 3 pm the Second and Fourth Wednesday. Upcoming Topics: **May 24:** “Let’s get to the root of racial injustice” - TED TALKS by Dr Megan Ming Francis; **June 14:** “A Conversation about Growing Up Black” and “A Conversation with White People on Race” – NY Times Op-Docs; **June 28:** “The Danger of a Single Story” – TED TALK by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

COLLAGE (LGBTQ + Allies) News ~ Our COLLAGE (LGBTQ + Allies) group will meet on zoom on **Tuesday, 23rd at 11 am**. This is a wonderful chance to connect! **SILVER PRIDE, June 10th ~** –COLLAGE will be hosting a table at the Sarasota Senior Center. This is a wonderful way to reach out to LGBTQ+ seniors and their Allies. Please sign up to help offer a warm welcome to those at this event. **COLLAGE LUNCHEON, June 11th ~ Mayomi Fowowe-Makinde**, a Gay man born and raised in Nigeria where he lived in constant fear for his life, will be our special speaker. When he was outed by a family member, he escaped from his native country to avoid imprisonment. (It is illegal to be Gay in Nigeria and family members face 10 years of imprisonment if they know a family member is Gay and do not report it.) The presentation is open to all. Please sign up in advance if you want a box lunch.

May 28th ~ Pentecost Sunday ~ wear RED to worship ~ ONE service at 11 a.m. with **Rev. Dr. David Pitt preaching. Rev. Dr. Pitt is a member of our church and a retired UCC pastor who**

served in a variety of ministries from chaplaincy to local church. Rev. Dr. Pitt is a member of our Lay Visitation Ministry and will guide us as we celebrate the birthday of the church.

Please join members of the Green Team on **May 28 right after the 11:00 a.m. service in the sanctuary and online**, when Rabbi Brenner Glickman of Temple Emanu-El and Bill Johnson of Brilliant Harvest will talk about the experience of Temple Emanu-El adopting 70% solar power for their campus. The Sarasota synagogue has a fascinating story to tell about how they came to the decision to go solar and how the process played out. Don't miss this important talk! See you on the 28th!

Wear Orange on June 4th to Remember Victims of Gun Violence ~~ Hadiya Pendleton was 15 years old, standing in a Chicago park and 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. 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 4**. We also joined a number of organizations in requesting that the city and county commissions in Sarasota and Manatee approve their own proclamations for Wear Orange Day.

Thank you for your participation. **Let's fill the pews with orange, the color of safety, on June 4th!**

CALENDAR

Sunday, May 21

Sunday Worship, 9 am, in sanctuary

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Olivia Bixby Graduation Party, noon, Syster Hall

Monday, May 22

Pastor Wes on vacation through May 29

Tuesday, May 23

COLLAGE Zoom, 11 am,

Wednesday, May 24

Bread for the World, 2 pm, Library and Zoom

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 pm, Oasis Center and Zoom

Thursday, May 24

Women's Fellowship Planning Committee, 10 am, Syster Hall

Sunday, May 28 ~ ONE Service ~ Rev. Dr. David Pitt

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in the sanctuary and online

Green Team Solar presentation, sanctuary and online, after worship

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