July/August 2023 Newsletter



First Congregational UCC

Important Sanctuary Information

At the June 13th Council meeting, our leadership received a report from Facilities and Grounds regarding our sanctuary. For several years, we have been exploring replacing our tiles and pew cushions. Both have served us well for many decades, both showing wear and tear, presenting some safety issues and neither are easily replaced or repaired. Many hours of research have gone into this process, thanks to the leadership of Bud Rives, chair of Facilities and Grounds.

A Sanctuary Design Team consisting of **Greg Chestnut, Carol Fields, Marsha Knight, and Becky Rives** have met to discuss options with an interior designer. Since January, we have been working prayerfully to make a thoughtful decision moving forward. Bud has met with contractors and vendors for over a year. Our Finance Team has also been kept in the loop on developments as well as cost projections.

Council voted unanimously to move forward with replacing the sanctuary/narthex/hallway tile as well as replacing the pew cushions.

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 ~ 8:45 a.m. in the Chapel

 Worship ~ 11:00 a.m. in person in the Sanctuary or Syster Hall and livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube and our website.

Pastor Wes Vacation Days: August 7 – August 13 October 2 – October 8 Through the generosity of **Roy Burns**, the pew cushions are fully paid—thank you for this tremendous gift! The remaining funding was set aside by the Finance Team into our Major Expense Fund when we found out that the tile shape and color were no longer manufactured and could not be matched. We knew this project was on the horizon for a few years; now is the time to act.

On Sunday, June 25th after the 11 a.m. worship in the sanctuary and online, we shared a presentation to the Congregation about the project. This presentation is still online for you to view if you would like.

In many ways, like the renovation of the Oasis Center a few years ago, there have been many thoughtful and loving conversations about this project over the last few years. Facilities and Grounds, Finance, and Council have all prayerfully sought to make the decision to move forward.

If you have questions concerning the process and timeline moving forward, please see Pastor Wes or Moderator Nancy Morris. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has already helped with getting this project to this point.



With God's love and blessings $\sim Wes$

Summer Reading Fun

During my senior year in high school, I tried out for a role in the play, *Our Town*. I was cast in the role of Stage Manager. I can still remember the rehearsals, trying to memorize my lines and being fitted for a costume. I was so nervous on opening night that I forgot some of my lines.



This summer marks 30 years since that moment and I thought it would be fun to gather a reader's theater and discussion of Thornton Wilder's play. **Please join me on Tuesday, July 18th and 25th @ 1 p.m. in the Oasis Center and on Zoom.** We will read aloud the play and discuss how Wilder's words connect to our life.

Please order a copy of the play for yourself wherever you purchase books and come ready to read portions and discuss the themes of this play. Please call or email Pastor Wes if you plan to attend this fun and faith-filled experience.

Summer 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/Syster Hall featuring our chancel choir, & Livestreamed (Facebook, YouTube, Website)

We continue the Sermon Series in July and August on Apostle Paul's Greatest Hits

July $2 \sim As$ we celebrate the 4th of July, we turn to 2 Corinthians 4, the treasures we have in clay vessels. Holy Communion will be offered at both services.

July 9 ~ Morning-by-morning, God renews and restores us. Every day is a new creation as we will hear in our focus scripture ~ 2 Corinthians 5. We continue to worship fully and with full voice.

July 16 ~ First Sunday Worship in Syster Hall at 11 a.m. and we will turn to Paul's letter to the Galatians and how the Spirit can infuse and inspire our living in these days.

July 23 ~ We will listen to Paul's words to the Ephesians, Chapter 3 and hear how God's renewing presence breaks down barriers we often believe are pervasive and permanent.

July $30 \sim$ We continue in Ephesians, Chapter 4, to learn how there is a unity in community; how our oneness also allows much space for our uniqueness. Come let us celebrate the ways God weaves us together as God's people.

August $6 \sim$ We will turn toward one of the earliest hymns in Scripture \sim Philippians 2 and how God awakens a holy human-size-ness within each of us. Holy Communion will be offered at both services.

August 13 ~ While Pastor Wes is away, we will continue to worship together.

August 20 ~ We continue to lean in and listen to Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5, asking how we can stay awake to God's movement in our midst every day.

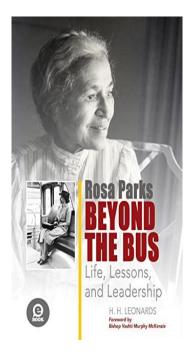
August 27 ~ As the sermon series on Paul's Greatest Hits winds down, we listen to the wisdom Paul gives in 2 Timothy 4 and the ways we can be a people poured out in love.

September 3 ~ ONE Service for Labor Day Weekend at 11 a.m. in Syster Hall. We will remember the great cloud of witnesses who are surrounding and sustaining us every day as described in Hebrews 12. Holy Communion will be celebrated as part of our service.

Racial Justice Mission Group Presents a Program on Rosa Parks

"I believe there is only one race, the human race."

Mrs. Rosa Parks, Mother of the Civil Right's Movement



H. H. Leonards, a personal friend of Rosa Parks, is an author who lives in Washington, DC. Ms. Leonards' latest book is entitled, *"Rosa Parks Beyond the Bus: Life, Lessons and Leadership."*

Ms. Leonards will be coming to Sarasota this summer to talk about her new book and share personal stories about her friendship with Ms. Parks. She believes this book, which describes Ms. Parks' way of interacting with the world, offers important lessons and inspiration for current and future community justice struggles.

The event will be held at First Congregational UCC's Syster Hall on a date to be determined—updates will appear in the mid-week message.

Ms. Leonards will have copies of her book for sale.

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 upcoming Sunday Bible passage.

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

SCOR (Sacred Conversations on Race) 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @ 3 p.m. ~ HYBRID in the Oasis Center—resumes August 9th.

> Zoom links available through Pastor Wes

Gather Your Water

As you've seen in the bulletin and the mid-week message, on October 29th we will continue our Gathering of the Waters tradition, a tradition dating back to October 1999 when Dr. John Syster was our pastor.

As you travel, you are encouraged to bring water from the locations you visited. Then, during the service, all those with water will be asked to come forward, empty it into a large crystal bowl, and tell us it's origin. The water will then be boiled and saved for future uses where the love of the congregation will be symbolically represented.

Are you thinking this doesn't apply to you because you're not traveling? Don't despair! There may be places close to home you want to highlight. Have you recently moved to a new home? Share water from there. As Pastor Wes has indicated, you can even share water from Iowa!



Meet Our Newest Members



Jane Delgado-Semidei

Jane came to Sarasota from New York with her husband Joe in June 2009. While she grew up mostly in New York, she also lived in Puerto Rico (native homeland), Washington DC and northern Virginia.

Jane attended Hunter College, City University of New York, New School for Social Research and New York University where she taught. Though retired, she worked as an arts administrator for various cultural institutions and assisted in long-range planning, advised foundations looking to support diverse arts groups and studied the ways culture builds communities. She especially enjoyed assisting small/medium art and cultural organizations where she developed marketing for their museum shops.

She has volunteered at Tidewell Hospice, the local food pantry and has already participated in several activities at our church.



Thank you to our sponsors: Nancy Morris, Dale & Cindy Woodling, and Guy and Ann Spencer



Nate Snyder

Nate moved to Sarasota from Akron, OH three years ago. He grew up in Bath Township and attended the Bath United Church of Christ. While in the youth group, Nate enjoyed the work camps to fix up houses and participated in Habitat for Humanity projects.

With many roles as manager of sports teams in high school and college, it is no surprise what he does today. He has worked for the Cleveland Indians: Akron Aeros, and the Columbus Clippers AAA team. For the Baltimore Orioles: Delmarva Shorebirds A Team, Beloit (WI) Snappers, and the Batavia (NY) Muckdogs. Nate is currently the clubhouse manager for the Baltimore Orioles minor league spring training facility in Sarasota, a job he loves.

He attended Revere High School and the University of Akron. It is from his Akron, OH days that he worshipped with Dale & Cindy Woodling—making First UCC feel like home.



Kathi Taylor



Kathi's early years were spent in Lansing, Michigan where she

received her Fine Arts degree from Michigan State University.

Some years later, Kathi completed her art teacher certification at the University of South Florida. She moved to Sarasota from Germany in 1970.

For 29+ years Kathi was a member of First Congregational before her move to Murphy, North Carolina where she currently lives. She is re-joining our church as an associate member.

While at our church, she was Vice-Moderator, Moderator, Trustee, and ONA co-chair. You will find Kathi's fingerprints on the sanctuary renovation, the building of Reed Chapel, and on the final vision for our current cross.

Besides her volunteer work, Kathi is an artist who also enjoys singing in the choir. She is passionate about animals-especially shelter dogs—adopting older dogs and large ones. We are delighted to welcome Kathi back.

Meet Our Scholarship Recipients

GIVING MATTERSI



Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Scholarship Endowment Fund and the very generous gift provided by David York and Ross Ellwood in creating the York-Ellwood Scholarship Fund, the Spiritual Education and Growth Team was able to award seven scholarships to students in our church family.

Olivia Bailey ~ University of Florida ~ Event Planning

Ethan Bixby ~ Florida State University ~ Psychology

Olivia Bixby ~ Florida State University ~ Criminology/ Criminal Justice

Garvey MacFarlane ~ State College of Florida ~ Bio-Medical/Health

John Ristow ~ Chicago Theological Seminary ~ Divinity

Joshua Starcher ~ University of Florida ~ Pediatric PT (Children with Disabilities/Medical Challenges)

Colin Vanarsdall ~ University of Central Florida ~ History



A safe place to find strength and hope through the sharing and 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, and to find your voice.

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

Thank You from Second Chance Last Opportunity

I am so grateful for the generous souls at First Congregational UCC! Thank you for all the personal hygiene items, etc. that you stuffed into the truck of Lucy Hedrick's car.

Our shelves are brimming again, and as we go into our hottest months, these are the items our clients are seeking.

Dr. April Glasco, Founder & CEO (Second Chance Last Opportunity, Inc.)

Family Promise Update



Family Promise is on the move; literally. In early June all the items being held in storage were moved into the new Francis House location. People from ten congregations, including First Congregational, helped to unpack boxes, assemble furniture, attach child-safety features on cabinets, and organize the new three-bedroom home.

More good news is that the **Home for Good** program has succeeded in helping 98% of 300 families served to remain in safe, stable housing.

The challenge is that donations have dropped off considerably as seasonal residents have moved north. If you would like to help us keep serving families facing homelessness, you can donate by sending a check to:

Family Promise of Sarasota - Manatee 8499 Tamiami Trail, PMB 267 Sarasota, FL 34238

You can also donate online at www.familypromisesarasota-manatee.org

All the ways you support the work of Family Promise are truly appreciated.





Thank You

Family Promise sends a big thank you to First Congregational UCC for your generous gifts to help with the reopening of Francis House!

We are so proud to represent you as Family Promise coordinators for our church!

> Gratefully, Ellen Marsey And Dotty Reed



Your Offering of Letters results have been received.

Thank you for submitting the report, and congratulations on completing your Offering of Letters! You have joined hundreds of churches, campuses, and small groups across the country this year in advocating for an end to hunger. Let me know if you have any questions about next steps.

Bread is grateful for your leadership and partnership as we pursue a world without hunger.

God's blessing, *Florence French Fagan (Organizing and Faith Engagement Department)*

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 (<u>fredleebrock@aol.com</u>) or Wes Curry (<u>jowescurry@verizon.net</u>).

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT NEWS



PRIDE Sunday Painting by Gary LaParl

Gary LaParl's painting displayed on Pride Sunday in our Sanctuary has been sold.

The proceeds will benefit 50/50 to Equality Florida and Collage. In case you missed it, here is Gary's beautiful painting.

Thank you for your generosity, Gary!

Poster by Cas Burleson Paraments by Helaine Eckstein







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.**

July ~ We are taking a break.

August 9th ~ Check the mid-week messages for updates.

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.

Did You Know?

- Although Lincoln declared all slaves free in 1863, it would not be implemented in states under Confederate control. Texas slaves were not freed until 2+ years later (June 19th, 1865)—Juneteenth.
- Juneteenth became a National Independence Day Act Holiday in 2021.
- Today nearly two dozen states (including Florida) do not recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday.
- In 2022, The Texas legislature proposed teaching the history of slavery as "Involuntary Relocation". The Texas Board of Education resisted.



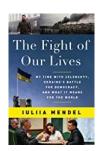
Gregg Matthews (**Scars** by Brenda Robinson)

Ready Readers \sim July 13th & August 10th

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.** 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 <u>sandysmithvi@gmail.com</u> or 340-227-5121.

human values, especially in these darkest of times.



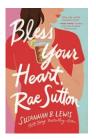


The Fight of Our Lives by Iuliia Mendel. When Ukranian journalist Iuliia Mendel got the call that she had been hired to work for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, she had no idea what was to come.

In this frank and moving inside account, Zelenskyy's former press secretary tells the story of his improbable rise from popular comedian to the president of Ukraine. Mendel has a front row seat to many of the events preceding the 2022 Russian invasion.

Throughout this story she reminds us of the paramount importance of truth and

July 13th



August 10th

Bless Your Heart, Rae Sutton by Susannah B. Lewis. Sometimes what your life is missing is an eccentric group of older ladies to take you under their wing . . .

When Rae Sutton's mama passes away and leaves her the house where she grew up, Rae can't imagine how the little old place might restore her broken life. Mourning the loss of her marriage, she takes the house and settles back into her tiny hometown with her 14-year-old daughter.

There she's embraced by her mother's close-knit circle of friends, the Third Thursday Ladies. Rae relies on the unlikely family she's found and begins to wonder if her future holds more hope than she ever could have imagined.

Community Meal ~ July 25th & August 22nd

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 homebaked 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 **July 25th and/or August 22nd 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

Heard on Sunday . . .



"This church is where we CELEBRATE our differences. In this church we are encouraged to be our true selves. Here we are loved for who we are! You remember the words to the song: *'In this very room there's quite enough love for all of us*.' That's what this church is all about." ~ *Pauline Geary*

In a letter to our trans youth friends, "We remind you that you are loved and will always be warmly welcomed and supported as part of our church community. Today we pray for you during our worship service knowing your name is already written on God's loving heart." ~ *Lee Brockmann*



Community Meal



"It is so important that we remain vigilant, we keep the faith, and do all we can to support and assure equality and equal access in all segments of our society for black Americans and all citizens in our country." ~ *Gregg Matthews*

Kings & Queens Bridge ~ July 10th & August 14th

Kings and Queens Bridge will play on Monday, July 10th and August 14th @ 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 to play.

Please call or email Ethel Rudy @ 941-727-0122 or loisrudy253@gmail.com.





Hosting Fellowship

July ~ Facilities & Grounds

(Dave Abel, Chris Cooper, Don Hoy, David Kerrigan, Rich Rescigno, Bud Rives, Bill Plerhoples, Carol Fields)

August ~ Budget, Finance & Stewardship

(Ed Andersen, Bill Brackett, Sue Fields, Gib Mitchell, Steve Combs, Joy Kuhn, Pauline Geary) Dale Woodling & Robin Reich—ex-officio

Have You Noticed?

Thanks to the talents and determination of Don Hoy, we now have new fencing to display information about our church.

Thanks to the creativity of Carol Fields, we have brightly colored banners that provide information about who we are as well as when we hold services.

Importantly, these banners can easily be updated to reflect what is happening now.









Scott & Pam Cooper on the passing of daughter, Hillary Don Hoy on the passing of nephew, Jeff Jean McMurren on the passing of her sister Scott Nutter on the passing of partner, Chuck Hattendorg Chuck Shipman on the passing of grandson, Russell Bettye Smith on the passing of brother, George Houston, Jr.





7/2	John Hilficker Ken Knoch	7/17	Woody Fletcher
	Donna Papenhausen	7/18	Lovette Harper
7/4	Olivia Bixby Chris Cooper	7/19	Ruth Ann Waid
		7/20	Michael Keane
7/6	Alstead Cady Craig Collemer Kathryn Sheila Noyes	7/21	Earl Alger Gail Johnson
	Ruth yn Shena Noyes		Gui joinijon
7/7	Maryanna Daniel Roger Weiss	7/23	Janet Raines
- 10		7/24	Janet Tipton
7/8	Bonnie Briggs Madge Shelly Taylor	7/25	Julie Chismar David Mitchell
7/9	Joy Mayer		Nancy Taylor
7/10	Buck Greenlaw Emma Wilbur	7/26	Stephen Scott Joan Sheil Kevin White
7/11	Barbara Shaver		
7/12	Kate Harris Peggy Kolpin	7/27	Thomas Green Jeanette Sherrill
		7/29	Margaret D'Albert
7/13	Phyllis Collins Millie Small	7/30	Roger Hazard



7/1	Lois & Bernard Watson
//1	LOIS & Bernard Walson

- 7/2 Jim & Sandy Butterworth
- 7/9 Erik & Rhea Terdal
- 7/11 John Botti & Sheila Gossett Peter & Ashley Burroughs
- 7/14 Ed & Jan Andersen
- 7/15 Richard & Lou Bertha Wharton
- 7/16 Thomas & Barbara Green
- 7/17 James Moody & Marjorie Englehard
- 7/18 Jeffrey & Donna Carlson
- 7/24 Gordon & Sharon Quimby

90+ Wise Birthdays ~ Card Shower ~

7/7 ~ Maryanna Daniel 7/13 ~ Millie Small 7/18 ~ Lovette Harper 7/29 ~ Margaret D'Albert

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



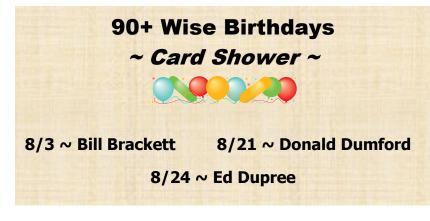


8/1	Sandi Armstrong	8/
8/2	Roy Burns	
8/3	Bill Brackett Joy Kuhn	
8/4	Eric Hohenthal Linda Pursley	8/ 8/
8/5	Joseph Mayer	8/
8/7	Chad Kalisak	0/
8/10	Robert Kitterer	8/
8/12	Jeanne Koren Kitty Miller	8/ 8/
8/13	Dan Brown Sue Fields	-
8/15	James Cross Lou Bertha Wharton	8/
8/16	Andre Plette	8/ 8/

/17	Pat Grubb Lynn Jones Marjorie Long Larry Ream Becky Rives
/18	Tim Toops
/19	Jean-Marie Steele
/21	Donald Dumford Howard Taylor
/22	Jim Fogle Brenda Robinson
/23	Priscila Crumel
/24	Ed Dupree Jane Hunder
/26	William Plerhoples Sarah Sands
/27	Dottie Peterson

3/29 Steve Horowitz Larry Smith

8/30 Jim Crumel







8/1	Jerry & Marjorie Long
8/6	Bob & Betty Goldman
8/8	Dan Henderson & Sara Lindgren
8/9	David & Lois Wilkins
8/11	Edward & Beverly Carrington
8/12	Kevin & Kathy Kulakowski
8/14	Loren & Peggy Kolpin Michael Johnston & Kristi Weiland
8/15	Harold & Janet Kamm
8/16	Roger & Myrna Morris
8/17	Ray & Janet Baker
8/19	Wesley & Gina Bixby Eric & Sally Hohenthal
8/22	Joe & Jane Delgado-Semidei
8/23	Guy & Ann Spencer
8/24	Jon & Carrie Metzger
8/27	Dave & Karen Abel
8/28	Jim & Ellen Marsey

8/29 Tim & Connie Toops

Richard & Mary Jane Sparrow



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 <u>admin@uccsarasota.com</u> We are grateful for the fresh flowers every Sunday that bring the beauty of God's creation into our worship space.

<u>Staff</u>

Senior Minister	Rev Dr. Wes Bixby
Minister of Music	Gregory Chestnut
Campus Manager	Mark Swain
Media Specialist	Douglas Kingsley
Bookkeeper	Pam Ganshe-Boythe
Financial Clerk	TBD
Office Administrator	Sherry Glover

OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Moderator	Nancy Morris
Vice Moderator	Harold Mezile
Past Moderator	Jim Butterworth
Co-treasurers Robi	n Reich & Dale Woodling
Pastor Emeritus	Dr. John Syster
Contributing Photographer	Susan Moore
NewsletterCarol	McCloud, Evelyn Crooks

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 worshiping 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.