

Aug 20, 2023~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



Encourage
one another
and build up
each other....

I Thessalonians 5:11, NRSV

Flowers given by **Kathie Stewart**

PRELUDE

Prelude in B flat minor

J. S. Bach

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: Gathered in the presence of the One who infuses and inspires us,

Many: May Jesus Christ be praised!

One: For moments the Sacred strengthens and sustains us,

Many: Praise to the living God!

One: For all that is unresolved and unsolved, we offer up all that is within us in worship,

Many: Let us join with earth joyfully singing out for all Sarasota to hear.

*OPENING HYMN

When Morning Gilds the Skies

When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries, may Jesus Christ be praised!

Alike at work and prayer, one purpose I declare: may Jesus Christ be praised!

New strength comes night or day when from the heart we say, may Jesus Christ be praised! Let sin and evil fear, when this sweet chant they hear: may Jesus Christ be praised!

Discordant humankind, in this your concord find, may Jesus Christ be praised! Let all the earth around ring joyous with the sound: may Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine, may Jesus Christ be praised! Be this the eternal song, through all the ages long: may Jesus Christ be praised!

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, we confess the ways we turn faith into a holy “to-do list”. Worship, prayer, volunteering, attending events, saying the right things, can all be expectations and “shoulds” we carry around inside us. While we appreciate a good plan; sometimes we find ourselves resisting, even resenting, being told what we ought to do. We can feel our inner toddler stomping our feet when we hear Paul give us *another* list of how to live faithfully today. When we hear words about not repaying evil for evil, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks always, we feel our shoulders *and* souls start to slouch. Help us, O God, not hear Paul’s words as ways we earn Your love, but as invitations to explore and experiment with throughout life. In the name of the One who goes besides, before, behind, and with us always, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*RESPONSE

Perpetual Praise

Your many blessings are new each morning and with each dawning we sing your praise!

From early morning to restful evening our grateful hearts sing praises! Your love and mercy, shining bright, bring hope and joy as we follow in Your light. You breathe within

us. You sing within us. You move our hearts to perpetual Praise! Through all of our days. Perpetual Praise!

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5, *selected verses*

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. ¹² But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; ¹³ esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. ¹⁵ See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

In the Meantime

OFFERING/ANTHEM

Arise, My Soul, Arise

Dale Wood

PASTORAL PRAYER & NEW ZEALAND VERSION of LORD'S PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of Your name echoes through the universe; The way of Your justice be followed by the peoples of the world; Your heavenly will be done by all created beings; Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trial too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For You reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

What a Covenant

What a covenant, what a joy divine, leaning on the ever-lasting arms. What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the ever-lasting arms. *Refrain*

Refrain **Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning, leaning, on the ever-lasting arms.**

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the ever-lasting arms. Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the ever-lasting arms. *Refrain*

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the ever-lasting arms? I have blessed peace with my Savior near, leaning on the ever-lasting arms. *Refrain*

*BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, August 20, 2023

OUR MISSION Helping Our Neighbor – Alta Vista Elementary School Our sweet school just across the street has many needs that we fill each year with our \$7,000 donation. With your generosity, we help provide student and classroom supplies and for those most in need, clothing. Prayerfully consider what you can share by writing a check to the church with "Alta Vista School" written on the memo line. Blessings and many thanks, Your Mission Team Jan Andersen, Gretchen Friend Jones, Jan Kamm, Nancy Taylor, Terri Crawford.

Our very own, Gary LaParl is having an art show at Art Ovation Lobby Art Studio 1255 N. Palm Ave **until Aug. 21!** He will be in the Art Ovation Lobby Studio from 4PM to 8PM daily. The exhibit is called "Portraits from a Stolen Past," and will feature oil paintings and oil collage works based on vintage portraits.

LGBTQ+ Grief Support Group ~ 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 in the **Oasis Center** ~ **Contact Cas @ casbgroup1234@gmail.com**

Sacred Conversations on Race Continues on August 23 at 3 pm: "How to Have a Voice and Lean into Conversations about Race" - TED Talks by Amanda Kemp. **September 13:** "The Urgency of Intersectionality" - TED Talks by Kimberle' Crenshaw. **September 27:** "We Need to Talk about an Injustice" - TED Talks by Bryan Stevenson All are welcome! You can join either in person in the **Oasis Center** or on **Zoom**. Please see Jim Crumel for more information.

Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE) News:

We want to thank you for your continued support of SURE during the past 3 years. It is no secret that our organization has been through some staff turnovers. This has caused difficulty in gaining ground on our issues, developing leaders, and growing our organization. But God is indeed doing a new thing in our midst! **WE HAVE EXCITING NEWS!** At our May 15th meeting, the board voted in a Custodial Leadership Team (CLT) consisting solely of past SURE Co-chairs. This group of clergy is working to bring stability, leadership, and vision to our organization. The CLT consists of the following leaders: Rev. Carla McCook – St. Margaret of Scotland Episcopal; Rev. Vincent Smith – Trinity CFC; Rev. Wes Bixby – First Congregational UCC; Rev. Patrick Miller – Bethlehem Bible Church; Rev. John Walker – Retired Pastor; Rev. Wayne Farrell – St. Boniface Episcopal; Rev. Keturah Pittman – SURE Director of Clergy Engagement. In addition to this group of leaders, the Hiring Committee and SURE board has **brought on not one, but two staff members!** First, we are thrilled to announce that we have hired **Mackenzie Grimes** as our Lead Organizer! Mackenzie is a Sarasota native, holds a Master's Degree, and has been a teacher at Booker High and Riverview High for the past 9 years. Mackenzie is a smart, gifted, and energetic leader with a heart for justice in Sarasota. She has everything we were looking for except specific

experience in the role. We are also thrilled to announce that **we have hired Rev. Ryan McBride as our Temporary Executive Director!** As a previous Lead Organizer for SURE, Ryan brings experience and leadership to our organization that the CLT, Board, and Hiring Committee agree will help them to stabilize SURE and accomplish the above-mentioned goals. He will primarily work to oversee, mentor, and train Mackenzie for the next 12-18 months. As this “New Thing” springs up among us at SURE, we invite you to mark your calendars for **Monday, September 18th, at 6 p.m. at First Congregational United Church of Christ.** We will hold our kickoff as well as a meet and greet with our new SURE staff! Please also hold **October 15 after both services** when we will host a House Meeting to regroup ourselves in our justice ministry, hear what is on your heart, share updates regarding issues, and connect. This is an exciting time for SURE!!

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.

CALENDAR

Sunday, August 20

Sunday Worship, 8:45 am, chapel

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in **Syster Hall** and online

Fellowship Time following worship ~ **National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day**

Tuesday, August 22

COLLAGE Gathering, 11 am, Zoom

Spiritual Education and Growth, 2 pm, Oasis Center & Zoom

LGBTQ Grief Support Group, 6 pm, Oasis Center

Church Council, 6:30 pm, **Chapel & Zoom**

Wednesday, August 23

Wednesday Morning Bible Study, 11 am, Oasis Center and Zoom

Stewardship Meeting, 1 pm, Zoom

COLLAGE Executive Committee, 2 pm, Zoom

Sunday, August 27

Sunday Worship, 8:45 am, chapel

Sunday Worship, 11 am, in **Syster Hall** and online

Fellowship Time ~ **Another!! Ice Cream Social**

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