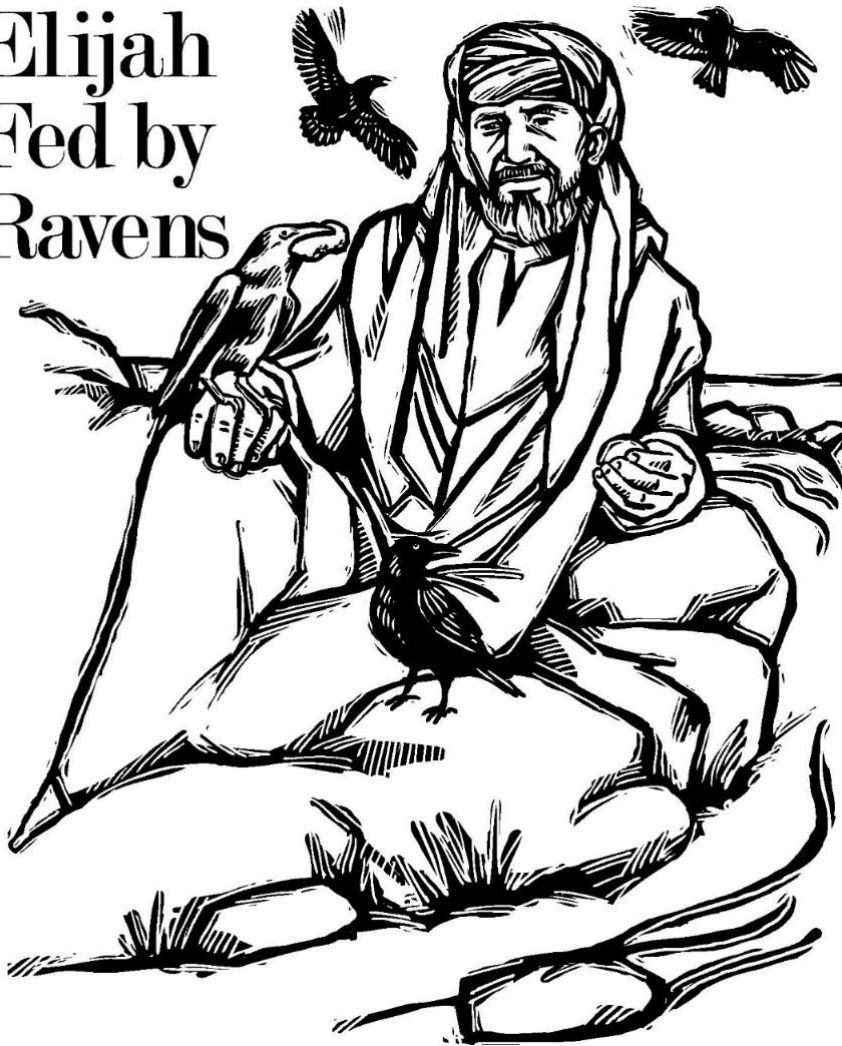


September 24, 2023~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota

Elijah
Fed by
Ravens



September 24, 2023

11 a.m.

Flowers given by: **Lee Brockman**, in loving memory of **Fred's** birthday, September 28th, **Nydia Muniz-Smith**, in loving memory of my mother, **Lydia Bas**, and **George Francis** and **Rachel Taylor**, one white rose for their new great grandson, **Raiden Silas Tarlton**

PRELUDE

Aria

Paul Manz

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: Bless the Lord,

Many: **Let our prayers and praise pour forth from our souls, hearts, and our whole being.**

One: Rejoice with God,

Many: **For the Spirit of God swirls awakening us, energizing us with enthusiasm.**

One: Remember God goes before you to guide you, beside you to befriend you, behind you to support you, and beneath you to be the ground of your being.

Many: **God is the wind at our back; Christ is the wisdom of life; and the Spirit is active here inspiring our worship.**

*OPENING HYMN

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

#18

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this baren land; I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow. Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield, ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.

*OPENING PRAYER

God of people and places throughout the years, we gather knowing the truth that our geography impacts our spirituality. We are connected to creation from the soil and stardust in our bodies to the birds that awaken a song for us to sing to the breeze that refreshes and renews us. Your fingerprints, O God, are all over the world. You continually invite us to pay attention. We recall moments when the land has shaped us. From the earliest home we can remember.

Pause, remember your childhood home.

To the first place we had on our own.

Pause, remember a place from your early adulthood.

To the place we call home right now.

Pause, envision a spot in your house that is holy.

To this place right here, this campus with the cross at the center, we know all ground is holy because You are everywhere. You, O God, are a circle whose center is everywhere

and whose circumference goes beyond the furthest galaxy. You meet us here, in this place. Guide us with Your grace, fill us with Your love, and feed us with Your peace that nourishes our lives every day. 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 Kings 17:1-7

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”² The word of the Lord came to him, saying,³ “Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.”⁴ You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.⁷ But after a while the wadi dried up because there was no rain in the land.

SERMON

The Muscle of Trust

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.

ANTHEM

Hungerin’ In My Soul

Pepper Choplin

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

***PRAYER of DEDICATION**

***CLOSING HYMN**

Great is Your Faithfulness

#423

**Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator,
with you no shadow of turning we see.
You do not change, your compassions they fail not;
all of your goodness forever will be.**

Refrain: **Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!**
 Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 All I have needed your hand has provided,
 Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
 sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
 Join with all nature in manifold witness
to your great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,
 your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. *Refrain*

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Cwm Rhondda

Paul Manz

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, September 24, 2023

Next Sunday, October 1 is World Community Sunday. Our Hunger Group is asking us to bring an item for **All Faith's Food Bank**. All Faiths would appreciate any items in jars and/or cans along with items that have a long shelf life like pasta, pudding, jello etc... The old standby items of peanut butter, jelly and spaghetti sauce are also needed. Please give what you think people will enjoy with an expiration date of mid 2024 or later. There will be a basket in the narthex labeled ALL FAITH'S FOOD BANK. Please place your items in the basket or next to it if the basket is full. **We welcome two special guests next Sunday: Rev. John Vertigan from the Florida Conference UCC and Barbara Richards, executive director of Project 180.**

SAVE THE DATE ~ Summer 2023 may well be remembered for Dangerous Floods and Deadly Wildfires, not to mention extreme heat. The scientists are telling us that the fires spread very quickly because the grasses are **invasive plants** rather than native. Have you ever driven north on I. 75 and seen the vast growth of kudzu, "the weed that ate the south," on both sides of the highway? Every tree and bush and flower are covered by this invasive plant. What is the antidote to this and other plants gobbling up our world? The First UCC Women and the Green Team have assembled an **Environmental Panel: Why we must plant native flora in our gardens and be wary of invasive plants that destroy ecologies.** Join us on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 11:30 am in Fellowship Hall. Panelists: Miri Hardy, Executive Director of the Friends of Myakka; Tom Heitzman, Sweet Bay Nursery; Lee Amos, Land Stewardship Manager, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. After the program, members of our Green Team will show us the native plants on our campus. Luncheon costs \$12. Sign up after either Sunday service or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

The Green Team would like to let the congregation know of a wonderful opportunity coming up December 5-6, 2023, a Tuesday and Wednesday. The largest and most exciting Eco-Summit ever in Sarasota will be happening in and near the Van Wezel. For complete information, go to this URL: <https://www.scienceandenvironment.org/project/2023summit-expo/> Also, a Green Living Expo will be available on December 2-3 at the Municipal Auditorium. If you purchase tickets for the Eco-Summit by September 30, you can save 25%.

Sacred Conversations on Race Continues **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**. **October 11**: “The Real Story of Rosa Parks - And Why We Need to Confront Myths about Black History” - TED Talk by David Ikard. **October 25**: “How to Deconstruct Racism One Headline at a Time” - TED Talk by Baratunde Thurston Please see Jim Crumel for more information

The Manasota Interracial Book Club (MIBC) fall meeting is hosting a panel discussion on **Saturday, September 30**. The meeting will take place from **10:00 am to 12:00 pm** at **First Presbyterian Church, 2050 Oak Street**. The panel will reflect on the question: “*What are the long term consequences of ignoring diversity, equity and inclusion in our society?*” Panel includes: **David Wilkins**, Esq and President, Manasota branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH); **Jill Lewis Spector**, 2nd Vice President, League of Women Voters of Florida Chair, LWV-FL & LWV-SRQ Education Action Teams; **Sharon Preston-Folta, Sr.** Account Executive with **WUSF Public Media in Tampa** and **Volunteer Programmer at WSLR 96.5 FM**; and **Pastor Wes. Renée James Gilmore**, Producer & Host of Empowering Voices at ABC7-WWSB will serve as moderator of the panel.

Project 180 is hosting a speaker and luncheon on October 19 at Michael's on East. Doors open 11:00 and program 11:30 to 1:00. *A Look Behind the Scenes: The Realities of Prisoner Reentry*. Laura I. Appleman, JD, discusses the myriad ways in which criminal justice costs—fees, fines, court costs, probation payments, mandatory classes, and non-payment penalties—affect reentering citizens and how these costs can lead to years of indebtedness. Professor Appleman is a member of the faculty at the College of Law at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon where she is the Van Winkle Melton Professor of Law and a University Research Integrity Officer. **Go to Project 180 to purchase tickets, \$40 each and include lunch. Backpack Supplies Wish List** When Barbara Richards is with us next week, we will hear about Project 180s backpack program. This is a resource given to each person released from prison and includes: Toothpaste and toothbrush; Comb; Flashlight with battery; Body wash (medium size); Shampoo (travel size); Deodorant (regular size); Hand towels (2); Wash rags (2); Rain poncho; Bike lock; Bike lights (for front and back of bicycle); Water bottle; Razors and shaving gel (medium size gel or cream); Mylar emergency ‘space blanket’; Sunscreen (medium size); Bug spray (medium size)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota (3975 Fruitville Rd.) will sponsor a showing of *A Walk to Respect* ~ recorded at the Kennedy Center. *A Walk to Respect* are words spoken and written by Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass over 150 years ago that still resonate today. There will be a panel discussion following. Event begins at 6:20 pm on Saturday, September 30th. Panel discussion begins at 7:30 pm. You can email eventsuucs@gmail.com for free tickets.

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

CALENDAR

Sunday, September 24

Sunday Worship, 8:45 am, **Sanctuary**
Sunday Worship, 11 am, in **Sanctuary** and online

Monday, September 25

Hunger Group meeting, 2 pm, Zoom
Pet Blessing meeting, 3 pm, Oasis Center
PFLAG meeting, 6 pm, Oasis Center

Tuesday, September 26

COLLAGE (LGBTQIA+ & Allies), 11 am, Oasis Center & Zoom
LGBTQ Grief Support Group, 6 pm, Oasis Center
Tuesday Bible Study, 6:30 pm, Zoom

Wednesday, September 27

Wednesday Morning Bible Study, 11 am, Oasis Center and Zoom
Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 pm, Zoom
Church Choir, 7 pm, Chapel

Saturday, September 30

Manasota Panel discussion, 10 am, 1st Presbyterian Church

Sunday, October 1st ~ World Communion Sunday

Sunday Worship, 8:45 am, **Sanctuary**
Sunday Worship, 11 am, in **Sanctuary** and online
Birthday Sunday/Project 180 presentation, noon, Syster Hall

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