



November 2023



First Congregational UCC

In a few short weeks, many of us will be sitting down to a feast with family and friends sharing turkey, stuffing, bread ~ a celebration of all things carbohydrate!!



This is a month of giving thanks and naming/noticing our blessings.

In recent years, the prayer practice of gratitude has gained a lot of attention. Psychologists and medical professionals have seen how expressing thanksgiving every day can help our health physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

From the Mayo Clinic website, “Simply stated, gratitude should be practiced daily — just as you'd take that magic pill if it existed. Try starting your day by thinking of someone you're grateful for as soon as you wake up. It could be appreciating a friend who sends you funny texts, a teacher who recognizes your child's gifts, or the barista who hands you your coffee and shares friendly conversation. Later, thank that person with a text, note or kind word when you see them.”



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

Science says that gratitude releases “oxytocin,” that bonds you to others and gives us that warmth of being loved. Who knew that in the middle of the Pastor’s article, a science lesson would break out?



All this is to say there is much to give thanks for around our church in November. We begin by giving thanks for our saints. On **November 5th** we will light candles for all who are in God’s eternal embrace. We light candles for church members, family of church members, friends, and beloveds who forever left impressions upon our hearts.

Please remember that daylight saving time ends ~ ***turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, November 4th and enjoy an EXTRA hour of sleep.***



I'm
So
Excited We follow up with a celebration of Stewardship on **November 12**. The theme for this year’s Stewardship campaign is, “I’m so excited...” We are excited about a community where we can connect and belong, where we are committed to the work of justice and have covenants that give us direction to put our prayers in action, where music feeds our souls, and where we can show up as we are! ***What excites you about our church?***

November 19th is our annual Thanksgiving Sunday when we lift praise to God! In many ways, every Sunday is Thanksgiving Sunday. We will sing out to God for all Sarasota to hear and awaken all our feelings as oxytocin dances around in our minds. **We welcome the SO Brass Quartet along with our choir at both services.**



HOPE Finally, we will end the month by preparing for the season of Advent. On **November 26**, we begin our preparations for welcoming Christ’s birth and **honor Trans Remembrance Day. This will be a holy time of saying aloud** names of trans siblings who have died for expressing who they are. And in the face of the harsh reality, we will light the candle of “Hope” that burns brightly even in the midnight moments of life.

November will be overflowing with many meaningful moments in worship to lift our praise and thanksgiving to God. Come, ye thankful people, come, and let us sing out to our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Alleluia and Amen.

~ With thanksgiving and God’s love to all ~ *Wes*

WORSHIP

9 a.m. and 11 a.m. in the sanctuary
(Livestream every Sunday at 11 a.m.)

November 5 ~ ALL Saints Day ~ time change Sunday ~ turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed. We will remember our saints this Sunday by name and Pastor Wes will preach on 2 Kings 2 ~ as we sing about the chariot that swung low to carry Elijah home.

November 12 ~ Stewardship Sunday ~ I'm so excited. As a church we offer our time, talents, treasures, and whole life to God whose blessings know no ending. Pastor Wes will preach on 2 Kings 5, Healing of Naaman as one way to ponder prayerfully our mission, vision, and values for our church in the coming year. All are welcome.

November 19 ~ Thanksgiving Sunday ~ Come ye thankful people. Come and raise a song of praise to God. Our choir, along with the SO Brass Quintet, will help us make a joyful noise to God. Pastor Wes will preach on Psalm 100 as our theme song for life!

November 26 ~ Advent One and Trans Remembrance Day ~ We begin the season of Advent (early) by lighting the candle of HOPE this morning. Pastor Wes will preach on Luke 1, the narrative of Zechariah in the Temple.

Sorella Duo, cello and piano Candlelight Christmas Concert ~ Friday, November 24th @ 7 p.m. Reed Chapel and Music Center at First Congregational UCC

Limited Seating ~ Advanced tickets only ~ \$20.00 each. Tickets available on Sunday mornings and through the church office Monday & Tuesday 10:00 - 1:00; Wednesday and Thursday 10:00 - 2:00.

Embracing their Italian heritage, Sorella (meaning sister), Natalie and Rebecca Helm have enjoyed performing together since they were young children. Their deep musical connection has opened doors for them to perform throughout Italy, Japan, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and the entire U.S. They have performed with Celine Dion, Il Divo, Yo-Yo Ma, and others.

Both sisters are currently working as professional musicians. Natalie is the principal cellist for the Sarasota Orchestra and Founder of Upward Notes, Inc. Rebecca, pianist, is the Director and Founder of Go Go Allegro Music School in Boston.

Their CD, "Holidays with the Sorella Duo" was created specifically to have a reflective and nostalgic effect on the listener. This candlelight concert will give you peace and an opportunity to relax and unwind while enjoying some of your favorite holiday carols and classics. **Be sure to purchase your tickets soon.**



Florida Conference 2023 Annual Gathering "Dancing in the Dream: We Shall Prophecy"



*Our First UCC Delegates
Lynne Woodman & John
Rlstow*



*Lynn Jones, Moderator
of the Florida Conference*



*Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A.
Thompson, General Manager &
President of the National UCC
gave the keynote address.*

Join the Zoom Conversations



COLLAGE 2nd & 4th Tuesdays @ 11 a.m. ~ COLLAGE is our LGBTQIA+ 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.

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

Considering Membership?

New Member Class ~ November 5th Please join us in the **Oasis Center after the 11 a.m. worship service** to learn what it means to be a member of First Congregational UCC.

A light lunch will be served. You will have a chance to meet others and to ask any questions.

All who are interested in exploring membership will be warmly welcomed to this session.



New Member Sunday ~ November 19th All who wish to join will be welcomed and received at our 11 a.m. service with fellowship time afterwards to meet and greet your new church family.

Contact the church office or Pastor Wes for more information.

All are welcome here!



MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES ~

Celebrate Birthdays and Support Family Promise Sunday, November 5th ~ after 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services



We will celebrate November birthdays and have a challenge to raise money for Family Promise. Tara Maffei, Executive Director and/or Cynthia Schalk, Director of Partner Outreach, will be present and available to share information about the services Family Promise offers to support families facing homelessness and to answer any questions you have.

Treats will be offered after the 9 a.m. service and ice cream and cake will be provided for our traditional birthday Sunday celebration. **Our special challenge, to support Family Promise, is to donate either 25 cents, 50 cents or a dollar for each year of your life.** Regardless of what you donate, any donation is gratefully accepted and appreciated.



A basket will be at the end of the table, or you can give your donation to Ellen Marsey, Family Promise Co-Coordinator. **Thank you!**

November fellowship is provided by the Worship Team:

*Evelyn Crooks, Peggye Mezile, Jeannie Mitchell, John Ristow, Frank & Elaine Hallice and Susan Moore, Chair
Joy Mayer and Maggie Revere, Family Promise Volunteers*

Food Collection for All Faith's Food Bank ~ November 5th



*32 bags = 360 pounds
collected in October*

The newly established Food and Hunger Group is very pleased with our first collection on October 1st. **Thanks to our generous congregation, we donated 32 bags amounting to 360 lbs. of food.**

All Faith's Food Bank looks forward to our donations to serve those in need. **We will continue our collections the first Sunday of every month.**

All Faith's appreciates 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.



First Congregational UCC is a generous congregation. We thank you in advance for your donations.

Family Promise

Our mother at Francis House welcomed her son, Jahsey Azari, on September 28th.



Our church provided Saturday dinner to the family during the month of September. **A big thank you to Ruth Bieber, Carol Hagglund, Becky Rives, and Alma Niemiller for providing these lovely meals to a most grateful family.** Our next opportunity to provide meals will be in February.



In other news:

- The Home-For-Good program has served almost 400 families since its inception
- New Keys-to-Tenancy course to help young adults learn about leases
- Ten additional families need housing
- Family Promise is actively looking for a day center
- Seeking to double churches involved
- Additional Board of Trustee members needed

Current needs:

- Size 5 Diapers
- Bubbles
- Baby Wipes
- Water Table
- Bouncy Ball
- Yard riding toy (18-month-old Javel)
- Chapter books/art supplies (8-year-old Galia)



To donate items:

Mary Margaret Barbour
404-216-6208

Contact:

Ellen Marsey or Dotty Reed
Co-coordinators

Thank you for all you do to make a difference!

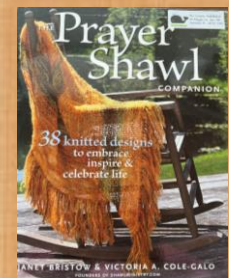


Prayer Shawl Ministry

Calling all knitters and crocheters! The next gathering of the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group will be on Tuesday, October 31st from 2 – 3:30 p.m. at Florence Jackson's home.

Contact Florence for address and directions (faj5110@gmail.com).

Contact Lindsey Huddleston (630-338-9294) or
Carol Hagglund (813-767-3782) for more information.



Refreshments will be served.



Angel Tree Gift Tags ~ Available November 12th

The Angel Tree tags will be here soon! Tags will be available for in-person pickup after the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services on November 12th.

Should you not be present to get a tag, please contact Sandy Smith 941-260-8337, 340-227-5121 or sandysmithvi@gmail.com--she will see that you are included.

There will be three ways to shop and return gifts:

1. *You may shop online and have the gifts delivered directly to the Salvation Army. (Instructions about how to do that will be provided with your tag.)*
2. *You may shop in person and deliver your gifts to the Salvation Army on Tuttle Avenue.*
3. *You may deliver your gifts to the church before/after worship on Sunday or during the week on Monday -Thursday.*



The deadline for donating your gifts is Sunday, December 3rd.

Community Meal ~ November 28th

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. What's not to like about homemade brownies/cake served with plenty of ice cream?



Our mission is to feed the hungry and offer fellowship to our guests.



Please volunteer with on-site set-up/serving/clean-up functions at St. Paul's Fellowship Hall. We also need your **home-baked items (brownies and frosted cakes—9x13 size)**.

Please join us on **November 28th 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

CREATION JUSTICE NEWS

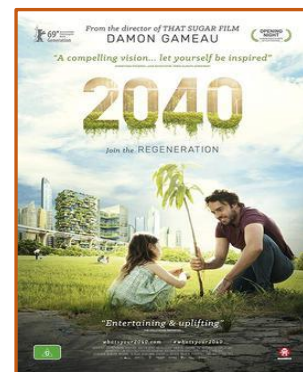
Eco-Summit ~ December 5th & 6th



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/>

As the website describes it, "The Summit explores the simple idea that to preserve quality of life, we must find a new balance with nature. We must counter the increasing impacts from development, population growth, and climate change with solutions that recharge our environment and reduce our footprint. Join us for two days of Big Ideas and Solutions."

Starting December 4, 5-8 p.m. there will be a showing of the new movie, *2040* by the widely acclaimed documentarian from Australia, Damon Gameau. This will happen at Bay Park Nest. The next two days, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., experts will discuss various insights and possible solutions for environmental sustainability. These insights are crucial for protecting our way of life here on the coast.



A major highlight will occur from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on December 5 with keynote speaker, Carl Hiassen. He is a novelist and former columnist with the Miami Herald. His novels are based in his native Florida and are highly entertaining with a focus on environmental concerns.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT NEWS

Free Showing of "*Mama Bears*"

- What:** Exclusive viewing of the documentary "*Mama Bears*"
- When:** Friday, November 10th at 6:30 p.m.
- Where:** Church of the Trinity, MCC
7225 Lockwood Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL
941-355-0847



"Mama Bears" is an exploration of the journeys of two conservative Christian mothers whose profound love for their LGBTQIA+ children has turned them into fierce advocates for the entire LGBTQIA+ community. "Mama Bears" is the story of women who have allowed nearly every aspect of their lives to be completely reshaped by love.

NOTE: The showing is free, but it is necessary to sign up by calling the church office, 941-355-0847, or going to their website www.TrinityMCC.com and selecting #DOTHEWORKOFJUSTICE.

COLLAGE Leads Discussion at Annual Conference



The Rev. Marilyn Lewis and Pauline Geary facilitated an Open and Affirming discussion circle of nearly 30 delegates and guests at the Florida Annual Conference in Orlando on October 13th.

After the discussion, a blessing of our new table cover, led by the Rev. Dr. Wesley Bixby and supported by attendees, sent us forth to continue our outreach into the LGBTQIA+ community at PRIDE events.

RACIAL JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS



Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR) ~ November 8th



SCOR meets the **second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 3 p.m. ~HYBRID~ in person at the Oasis Center or on Zoom.** We will not meet on November 22nd to observe the Thanksgiving holiday.

~ November 8th ~

"The Myth of Thanksgiving: Native American Perspectives on The Pilgrims"
from the PBS program, *American Experience*.

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.

Woodson African American Museum of Florida ~ St. Petersburg December 1st Day Trip (*Sign-up by November 20th*)

The Racial Justice Mission Group invites you on a day trip to visit the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum of Florida in St Pete on Friday, December 1st. Dr. Woodson was the inspiration for Black History Month and the founder of ASALH. You can read about the museum on its website. <https://woodsonmuseum.org/>



The free church bus can take 14 passengers and is available on a first-come-first served basis. Others will carpool with friends. Bus riders will meet at the church at 10:45 a.m. and leave at 11 a.m. The bus will return to the church by 4:30 p.m.

We will meet for lunch in St. Pete before the docent-led tour. The museum cost of \$10/person can be paid on arrival. To register for lunch, museum tour and/or bus, call or text Lindsey Huddleston at 630-338-9294.

In Other News . . .



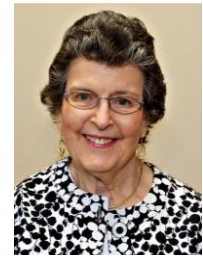
Free Program Honoring Indigenous Peoples' History & Culture



Saturday, November 4th
12:00 Lunch (free-will offering)*
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Syster Hall

***Contact Florence Jackson by**
October 30th
to reserve lunch
[**faj5110@gmail.com**](mailto:faj5110@gmail.com)



Ethel Rudy

Connie Toops, UCC Women's Chair, recently honored Ethel Rudy for her faithfulness and exemplary service for her 11 years as treasurer of the UCC Women's group.

Besides being a faithful choir member, Ethel also started the Kings & Queens Bridge Club which provided monthly gatherings and times of friendship. We wish Ethel all the best as she moves to be nearer her daughter.

Brady News



Brady Sarasota's 2023-24 season is underway and many thanks to First Congregational for the use of the Oasis Center for our Welcome Back meeting. Sarasota Police Department Sergeant Patrick Comac, who oversees the Patrol Division's Community Relations Unit, was the guest speaker.

Brady rallies have resumed. Please join us each **Thursday at 4 p.m.** to raise awareness about the need to stop gun violence. We meet at the end of the Sarasota Bayfront. **(November 2, 9, 16, 30)**

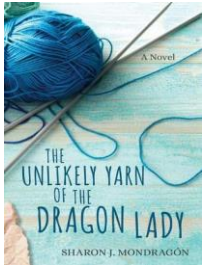
The annual Brady Vigil will be held at our church on December 8th. While the program is still being finalized, it looks like we will hear from Sarasota's Erica Darcey and her son Aaron, who continues to recover from what appeared to be a random shot to the head while riding his bicycle near his home several months ago. Aaron was 12 at the time. The vigil's featured singer will be Sheila Atkins who, along with her husband, former Sarasota Mayor Fredd Atkins, has been an active member of the Sarasota community for more than 60 years. Our own Lynne Woodman will provide the music and Lindsey Huddleston will do a liturgical dance.



Be sure to mark your calendars for December 8th at 6 p.m. in our sanctuary.

Ready Readers ~ November 9th

Thinking about joining a book club? 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 sandysmithvi@gmail.com or 340-227-5121.



November 9th

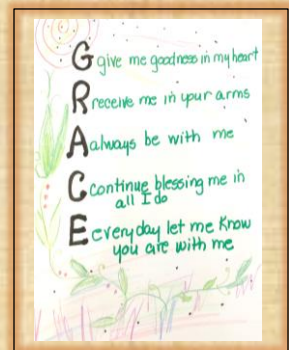
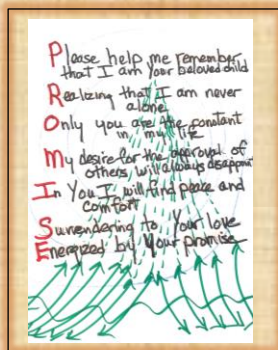
The Unlikely Yarn of the Dragon Lady by Sharon J. Mondragon. Margaret, Rose, Jane, and Fran had a good thing going—meeting every week in the quiet of their peaceful chapel and knitting prayer shawls. No muss, just ministry. That is, until their pastor boots them out of the church in his last-ditch effort to revive the dwindling congregation.

Uptight Margaret isn't having it. Knitting prayer shawls where people can watch is the most ridiculous idea she's ever heard of, and she's heard plenty. Prayer belongs in the church, not out among the heathen masses. How are they supposed to knit holiness into these shawls if they're constantly distracted by the public? Sharon Mondragon's debut novel is warm and delightful, full of real laughter, grief, and personality. It beautifully illustrates the power of women across generations to reach people for Christ.

Artful Prayer Resumes ~ November 9th at 2 p.m. ~ Oasis Center

Here are a few of the Acrostic Psalms created at October's Artful Prayer session led by Rev. Donna Papenhausen. You can watch this session or view previous sessions on YouTube (search *Artful Prayer United Church of Christ Sarasota*).

Join the November Artful Prayer session on Thursday, November 9 at 2 p.m. led by Lindsey Huddleston. The November Thanksgiving theme will focus on Native American spirituality. Come in person in the Oasis Center for the most fun or join on Zoom (contact Pastor Wes for the Zoom link). No art experience required.



~ Artful Prayer Psalms ~

First UCC Women's Luncheon ~ November 7th



Please join the UCC Women for their monthly lunch and program on Tuesday, November 7th at 11:30 a.m. in Syster Hall.

We will hear from Donna Rae Smith, (RN, BSN) about the charity she founded—School Attendance Support, Inc. or S.A.S. Donna learned that children living in poverty are much more likely to stay home from school, especially girls who are menstruating but have no sanitary supplies. If it's raining, boys and girls may stay home because they don't have raincoats.

Donna will explain how S.A.S. is addressing school attendance barriers faced by low-income children. By working directly with school staff—principals, teachers, nurses, school attendance officers—they are identifying and meeting some basic needs.



Luncheon costs \$12

Sign up after either Sunday service or call the church office at 941-953-7044. Questions? Call Lucy Hedrick, 203-561-9590, or lucy@lucyhedrick.com.



Remembering Our Saints



Edwin "Eddie" Brickner
Bruce Blakey
Jeff Coats
Hillary Cooper
Frances Corbin
Shirley Craigie
Steve Crooks
Dr. Fran Durocher
Norma Fuller
Nancy Gillum
Charles Hattendorf
Ronald Hazard
Harry Helton
Ruth Hermann
Clarence & Arthie Mae Hill
George Houston, Sr.
Rowena Janssens

Keith & Gail Johnson
Carol Jeanine Johnston
Harold Kuhn
Beverly Laier
Russell Little
Marge Lothian
Steve Lynn
John Mange
Lorraine E. Matthews
Esther Parsley Meade
Harold & Rhoda Mezile
Phillip Mezile
Gloria Mezile
Marie Elizabeth Montrose
Sandra Moody
Michele GERAL Miller
Tim Murray

Pat Myers
Robert Phelps
Jeanette Potts
Lucy Reich
Myron Robinson
Gene Rump
Marge Ring
Joe Semidei
Marilyn Shipman
Millie Small
Rita Stewart
Ed Tjarks
James Turbin
Lavilla Watson
David Wells
Janice Wood
Bryan Zuerner

November Birthdays



November Anniversaries



- 11/1 Gretchen Friend-Jones
Charles Shipman, Jr.
- 11/4 Cory Kuhn
Ethel Rudy
- 11/6 Kathleen Burleson
- 11/7 Christine Hoffman
- 11/8 Betty Goldman
Roger Leach
Sandy Phelps
- 11/9 David Crane
- 11/11 Bob Goldman
- 11/12 Charles Hawkins
- 11/15 Sara Lindgren
- 11/17 Casey Taylor
Kayla Taylor

- 11/18 David Abel
Julia Detloff
Jeff Smith
- 11/21 Janet Baker
Mary Kukainis
- 11/22 Jodi Kleppinger
- 11/23 Dennis Crooks
James Moody
Ian Vanarsdall
- 11/24 Lindsay Prospect
Eric Vanarsdall
- 11/25 Marjorie Hall
Leonard Hoffman
Betsy Traba
- 11/27 Mae Reid
Johnnie Williams

- 11/3 Dan & Pamela Gansch-Boythe
- 11/7 Michael Keane & Sylvia Abreu
- 11/25 Harold & Peggye Mezile
- 11/27 Michael & Sarah Dousa



In Loving Memory



*Eddie Brickner
Millie Small*



90+ Wise Birthdays
~ Card Shower ~
11/23 ~ James Moody



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

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 Heidie Heath
 Office Administrator Sherry Glover

OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Moderator Nancy Morris
 Vice Moderator Harold Mezile
 Past Moderator Jim Butterworth
 Co-treasurers Robin Reich & Dale Woodling
 Pastor Emeritus Dr. John Syster
 Contributing Photographer Susan Moore
 Newsletter Carol 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 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.

