

April 6, 2025 ~ 11:00 a.m.

# First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



“Your **faith** has  
**saved** you;  
go in **peace**.”

**LUKE 7:50**

1031 S. Euclid Ave. Sarasota, FL 34237 ~ (941) 953-7044

[www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)

Flowers given by: Barbara Shaver *in honor of Sara Little's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday*

PRELUDE

*Prelude in C Major*

by J.S. Bach,  
adapted for organ by Glenn Priest

CALL to WORSHIP:

One: All who feel distant and disconnected from the Divine, come!

Many: **All who wonder if such a warm welcome can be trusted, come!**

One: All who have doubts, like ants in the pants of faith, come!

Many: **All who are weary, worn out, and want to get away, come!**

One: All who long for justice, prayerfully seek to embody love, and long to be a follower of Christ, come!

Many: **Each person, who-so-ever, where-so-ever, how-so-ever, come! Come! Come!!**

\*HYMN

*Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness*

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see. Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair. Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice. Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

**Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

**Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

**Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong. Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come. Christ, be our Light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church, gathered today.**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**Abundant, anointing, astonishing God, You seek at-one-ment, connection with all creation. You pour out Your presence like Your beloved daughter, who washed Jesus' feet. Your affection drenches us with an ointment of healing and wholeness, even in these days. How often, O God, do we silently stand on the sidelines like the Pharisee judging situations that don't conform to our opinions? How often in the church do we protect traditions under the guise of respectability, rather than letting Your lavish, scandalous love undo us? Help us, O God, as we inch closer to our Holiest Week. Let the light of**

**Your love wash us, soak us, and renew us to be people who bravely, boldly reach out with loving actions, words and presence. In the name of the One, who welcomes all to the table, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

**\*RESPONSE**

*Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters*

**Wash, O God, your sons and daughters, newborn creatures of your womb. Number them among your people, raised like Christ from death and tomb. Weave them garments bright and sparkling; compass them with love and light. Fill, anoint them; send your Spirit, holy dove and heart's delight.**

**Every day we need your nurture; by your milk, may we be fed. Let us join your feast, partaking cup of blessing, living bread. God, renew us; guide our footsteps, free from sin and all its snares, one with Christ in living, dying, by your Spirit, children, heirs.**

**O, how deep your holy wisdom! Unimagined, all your ways! To your name be glory, honor! With our lives, we worship, praise! We, your people, stand before your, water-washed and Spirit-born. By your grace, our lives, we offer. Recreate us; God, transform!**

**ENGAGING SCRIPTURE**

Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him; and, when he went into the Pharisee's house, he reclined to dine. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair, kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now, when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." "A certain moneylender had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both. Now, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then, turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you *see* this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one, to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those, who were at the table with him, began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

**SERMON**

*Simon Says*

**OFFERING/ANTHEM**

*Alabaster Jar*

Craig Courtney

**\*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above, you heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Repeat) Alleluia, sing praises to the Lamb, Alleluia, Gloria! Alleluia, we worship and adore; Alleluia to the Lord! (Repeat)**

**CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION**

**One:** May the anointing One saturate your life.

**Many:** **And also yours!**

**One:** Break open the jars of your heart to God.

**Many:** **Like the beloved daughter, who washed Jesus' feet, we open our full selves to God.**

**One:** Come to the table where everyone is called by name and fed with love.

**Many:** **This is Christ's table, open to all.**

*The ushers will invite you to come forward in the center aisle. Please hold your hands in the form of a cup to receive bread and a grape, and return to your pew by the side aisles. There is gluten-free bread in the **center**. Pastor Wes will serve you in the pews, for those who wish. Please hold the bread and grape, until everyone has been served.*

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and SUNG 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**

*Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth*

**Mothering God, you gave me birth in the bright morning of this world. Creator, source of every breath, you are my rain, my wind, my sun.**

**Mothering Christ, you took my form, offering me your food of light, grain of life, and grape of love, your very body for my peace.**

**Mothering Spirit, nurt'ring one, in arms of patience, hold me close, so that in faith, I root and grow until I flow'r, until I know.**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

arr. Mark Hayes

*Liturgists:* Alex Mitchell

*Greeters/Ushers:* Jeannie and Gib Mitchell, Carolyn Habel, Dave Stewart, Jerry Oliver, Gerry Poisson

*Bus Driver:* Joan Faucher & Valerie Fields

*Emergency:* Barbara Shaver

## ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ April 6, 2025

**Today ~ A brief congregational meeting will be held following worship.** The purpose of the meeting is to approve a minor modification to ARTICLE VI – SERVICES AND MEETINGS, section 1. ANNUAL MEETING of the By-laws of the church. The Church Council has approved and is requesting a By-law change to add the words “or February.” **The restatement would read: “The Annual Meeting shall be held...in January or February, on a date to be set by the Church Council, at its December meeting....”**

**Please see your bulletin for an Easter Lily form** to help decorate our chancel on Easter Sunday. You can also call Zoey in the church office. The cost is \$15 per plant; order forms are due by April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**TOMORROW: Please join Pastor Wes for a time of prayer and the opening of our hearts to God on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, at 4 p.m., either in the Oasis Center or Zoom.** As we inch closer to our Holiest Week, join in a time of sharing grief, pain, lament, and all that we are carrying in our lives right now.

**Sacred Conversations on Race ~ On April 9<sup>th</sup>:** "Don't Take the Exit on People" - TED Talk by Justin Jones-Fosu. **On April 23<sup>rd</sup>:** "Police Brutality and the Less Conspicuous Ways Racism Kills" - TED Talk by Oscar Holmes IV.

**Sanctuary Cleaning ~ please join us on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 8 a.m.,** as we spruce up the Sanctuary for Holy Week! We will Murphy Soap the pews, vacuum the cushions and refresh our worship space. We will start at 8 a.m., but you are welcome to come whenever and for however long you can. Many hands make light the work.

**Scholarship applications are now being accepted.** Visit [www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com) to view the new look and/or apply. The deadline for completed applications is **April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Drumming as Spiritual Practice ~ April 15<sup>th</sup>, at 3 p.m.,** at the Chapel. Drums provided. New drummers welcome. Contact Lindsey Huddleston at (630) 338-9294.

### HOLY WEEK 2025

**Next Sunday, Palm Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ BOTH Services in the Sanctuary.** Pastor Wes will preach on Mark 11:1-11. We will raise our palm branches high, praying and praising God by singing, “*Hosanna*”!! We welcome horn player, Melvin Jackson, for special music.

**Maundy Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ Maundy Thursday, at 6 p.m., in the Sanctuary *and online*** ~ members of the Worship Team will share the story of the Last Supper, according to St. Matthew. Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith will offer special music, and holy communion will be celebrated.

**Good Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025** ~ Good Friday, at noon, in the Sanctuary. Pastor Wes will preach on St. Matthew's narrative of God's vulnerable love suffering on the cross and the tears in things. We will conclude the service outside, beneath the cross of Jesus.

**EASTER SUNDAY, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025** ~ Christ is risen; He is risen, indeed!! *Alleluia!!* **BOTH Services in the Sanctuary.** We welcome special guest musicians ~ brass and percussion from the Sarasota Orchestra ~ along with our amazing choir, to help us lift our voices high. Pastor Wes will preach on Matthew's resurrection narrative.

**Book Release Celebration ~ April 15<sup>th</sup>, 4-5 p.m.** Join **Pat Williams Owen** for a book release celebration of her most recent book of poetry. The event is free and open to all. Pat Williams Owen is the author of four poetry books, including *The Crossroad* (Shadeland House Modern Press, 2025), *Bardo of Becoming* (Accents Publishing, 2022), *Orion's Belt at the End of the Drive* (Accents Publishing, 2019), and *Crossing the Sky Bridge* (Larkspur Press, 2016). Her work has appeared in *Gulf Stream Magazine*, *Highland Park Poetry*, *The Hong Kong Review*, *The Louisville Review*, *Raven's Perch*, other print and online literary journals, and several anthologies.

**Men's Breakfast is Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>.** Coffee is ready at 8 a.m., and breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. Come for the fellowship and chance to connect with others. Call Zooey in the church office to RSVP.

**Glenn Priest** will offer a free concert on **Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, at 4 p.m.**, in the Sanctuary, with a reception to follow. Glenn's last Sunday with us is May 4<sup>th</sup>. Please bring a card of gratitude for all the ways Glenn has shared and shined his light! Stephen Fancher will be with us beginning Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> through June 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Pastor Wes will be away on continuing education** on April 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>. If you have a pastoral concern, please call the church office.

**April 27<sup>th</sup>**, we will celebrate Earth Day, with our Green Team leading worship.

### **THIS WEEK**

**Sunday, April 6 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist ~ Communion Sunday & All Faiths Food Bank**

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

**Noon ~ Congregational Meeting on By-law change**

12:15 p.m. ~ Birthday Sunday, Syster Hall

**Monday, April 7**

Facilities and Grounds Meeting, 10 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Racial Justice Mission Group, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

**Prayer Time, 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom**

**Tuesday, April 8**

Peace and Justice Group, 3 p.m., Oasis Center

Tuesday Night Bible Study, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

**Wednesday, April 9**

Bible Study, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Saturday, April 12**

**Sanctuary Cleanup, 8 a.m., Sanctuary**

**Sunday, April 13~ Palm Sunday! ~ Glenn Priest, Organist**

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Sanctuary

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online ~ Melvin Jackson, horn player

**Noon ~ COLLAGE ~ Report from Tallahassee**