

April 20, 2025 ~ 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.  
First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



1031 S. Euclid Ave. Sarasota, FL 34237 ~ (941) 953-7044  
[www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)

PRELUDE

*An Easter Fanfare*

by Carla Giomo

Glenn Priest, Organ; Gianluca Farina & Chris Pate, Trumpet; Hugo Bliss, Horn;  
Brad Williams, Trombone; Nate Seman, Tuba, and Marcelina Suchocha, Percussion

CALL to WORSHIP

One: The story unfolds and unfurls before the first ray of sun peaked over the horizon,

**Many: (softly) And people could barely hear the angels whisper, "Alleluia."**

One: With eyes blurry from too many tears and souls weary from this last week, the  
fiercely faithful women set out.

**Many: (a bit louder) And with each step, they moved toward an unexpected "Alleluia."**

One: And then, in the marvelous mystery that we never tire of telling, we discover a  
truth that makes all the difference in our lives.

**Many: Christ is risen, he is risen indeed! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

\*HYMN

*Fanfare and Hymn for Easter*

arr. Paul Sjolund

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!**

**With loud voices angels say: Alleluia!**

**Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!**

**Sing, ye heav'ns and earth reply: Alleluia!**

**Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!**

**Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!**

**Once Christ died, our souls to save, Alleluia!**

**Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!**

**Loves redeeming work is done, Alleluia!**

**Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!**

**Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!**

**Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!**

**Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!**

**Praise eternal as God's love, Alleluia!**

**Praise God, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!**

**Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**God, whose love is fragrant as lilies, and whose grace is found in peculiar places, open our sacred imaginations anew and afresh this Easter day. We long for the mystery and marvel of this day to rewrite our lives. Yet, too often, O God, before the sugar rush of jellybeans wears off, our alleluias have faded. Amid the chaotic clamoring of fear, frustration, us-versus-them narratives, and information that causes our minds to spin endlessly, we need another story amid the rollercoaster of life. Center us, O God, in the promise that You are not finished yet. Center us, O God, in Your presence that comes to us in barns and tombs, and in the fragile, fringe moments of this day. Center us, O God,**

**in the gospel medicine that Easter is not a day, it is a way of life. For Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia and Amen.**

ANTHEM

*My Master from a Garden Rose*

by Eleanor Daley

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him, the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then, go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then, Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

SERMON

More than a Plotline

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE 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.**

OFFERING/ANTHEM

*On the Third Day*

by Allen Pote

\*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)**

**Praise God above ye heavenly hosts,**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!**

\*CLOSING HYMN

*Crown Him With Many Crowns*

**Crown him with many crowns, The Lamb upon his throne; Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own; Awake, my soul and sing of him who died for thee, and hail him as thy matchless King throughout all eternity.**

**Crown him the Lord of love; Behold his hands and side, rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified; No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight, but downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.**

**Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave, and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save; his glories now we sing, who died and rose on high, who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.**

**Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time, Creator of the rolling spheres ineffably sublime. All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me; Thy praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity.**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Toccata from Organ Symphony V*  
Organ, Brass, & Percussion

by Ch. M. Widor

*Greeters/Ushers:* Carolyn Habel, Vinnie Cordero, Lindsey Huddleston  
Jan and Ed Andersen, Valerie Fields, Dick Miller, Jerry  
Oliver, Dave Stewart

*Liturgist:* Gib Mitchell

*Bus Driver:* Len Murray

*Emergencies:* Joan Faucher

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ April 20, 2025**

**EASTER SUNDAY, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025** ~ Christ is risen; He is risen, indeed!! *Alleluia!* Please join us for fellowship time following 11 a.m. worship.

**Pastor Wes will be away on continuing education** on April 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>. He will be spending the week at Montreat Retreat Center in North Carolina with pastors. Please keep Wes in your prayers. If you have a pastoral concern, please call the church office.

**Sacred Conversations on Race ~ April 23<sup>rd</sup>:** "Police Brutality and the Less Conspicuous Ways Racism Kills" - TED Talk by Oscar Holmes IV. **May 14:** "Thriving in Turbulent Times" - an interview with Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III. **May 28:** "Courage, Clarity & Community: Navigating Change and Uncertainty with Purpose and Heart" - excerpts from a program by Parker J. Palmer and Valerie Brown.

**Next Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>,** we will celebrate Earth Day, with our Green Team leading worship. Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher will preach on Isaiah 40:12-14. Lucy Tobias will offer a reflection, and Pastor Wes will offer a pastoral prayer.

**Glenn Priest** will offer a free concert, **NEXT 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 shone his light! Stephen Fancher will be with us, beginning Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> through June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Think teacups, think spring posies, tea sandwiches, and homemade cookies. The UCC Women invite one and all to A CELEBRATION OF MUSIC AND WORDS WITH TEA on **Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 a.m., in the Fellowship Hall.** Please bring your own teacup and be prepared to share a story about it around the table. We will enjoy readings by **Lucy Hedrick**, plus violin selections by **Zoey Ibara**, our office manager. Zoey moved to Sarasota, FL, to return to her musical roots and spread the healing power of music. Besides her passion for helping organizations stay organized, she also now serves as a trauma-informed Sound Meditation instructor and composer, facilitating public & private sound bath events, and teaching the art of inner journeying & mindfulness for emotional resilience. **The UCC Women collection this month is for Second Heart Homes.** They would greatly appreciate gift cards accompanied by an inspirational or positive affirmation note. Preferred gift cards include those for **The Women's Exchange, Lowe's, HomeGoods, Amazon, or Uber.** They are also accepting new 2025 day planners. At this luncheon, they will also approve the nominations for the 2025-2026 Executive Committee of the UCC Women's Board: **President:** Jane Hunder; **First Vice President:** Terri Crawford; **Second Vice President:** Joy Kuhn; **Secretary:** Donna Blakey; **Corresponding Secretary:** RuthAnn Waid; **Treasurer:** Roxanne Schwoch. This end-of-season celebration will also be a chance for you to share what kinds of programs you'd like to see next year. The luncheon costs \$15. You can sign up after Sunday service, or by calling the church office at 941-953-7044.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Glenn Priest will be the featured pianist performing the Choral Fantasy of the Beethoven concert at the Opera House. This is a Key Chorale event. Tickets cost \$20-\$55 and are available at <https://keychorale.org/concerts/beethovens-ode-to-joy/>.

Please join our own Lenny Hoffman for Arts and Minds: Celebration of NAMI Sarasota Manatee's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$100, which include hors d'oeuvres and drinks, and live music by The Geniuses Jazz Trio, with five local artists showcasing work. Contact information to purchase tickets is in the Midweek Message.

**Summer with the Psalms** ~Exhausted, exasperated, exceedingly unsure of what will happen next ~ that pretty well summarizes the state of my soul recently. Beginning on May 12<sup>th</sup>, we will begin reading the Psalms as a way to ground ourselves in a deep wisdom. There will be opportunities for Bible Study, small group conversations, daily meditations from Pastor Wes on his blog and Facebook. For more information, please see Pastor Wes and the May Newsletter. We pray this practice of engaging the Psalms will help you connect with our ancestors who have sung their prayers and praise to God over the centuries.

**Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> ~ Mental Health Awareness Day ~ Syster Hall (after the 11 a.m. service)**  
Many today are struggling with cognitive overload. It is both the amount and the pace of information that is dizzying and disorienting. Please join us in Syster Hall as we welcome folks from **SRQ Strong** to help us breathe and learn more about resiliency. This is a wonderful opportunity to check in with yourself mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. **All are welcome and bring a friend.**

### **THIS WEEK**

**Sunday, April 20~ Easter Sunday ~ Glenn Priest, Organist and Brass/Percussion**

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Sanctuary

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary & Online

Noon ~ Fellowship Time

**Monday, April 21**

Pastor Wes is away on continuing education until Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.  
Growing and Caring Team, 11 a.m., Oasis Center & Zoom

**Tuesday, April 22**

Church Council, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

**Wednesday, April 23**

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 p.m., Oasis Center & Zoom  
Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Thursday, April 24**

ASALH Membership Meeting, 10 a.m., Syster Hall

**Sunday, April 27 ~ Earth Day Celebration ~ Glenn Priest, Organist**

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel ~ Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher preaching  
11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary & Online ~ Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher preaching  
4 p.m. ~ **Glenn Priest Concert in Sanctuary**

**Pastor Wes will be away on vacation May 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Micki Robinson will preach on  
Mother's Day.**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

*Phone: (941)953-7044 Our website: [www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)*

*We are a **Creation Justice; Open & Affirming; and Racial Justice** Congregation of the United  
Church of Christ*

**MINISTERS: All the Members**

**STAFF:** Rev. Dr. Wes Bixby, **Pastor:** [wdbixby@yahoo.com](mailto:wdbixby@yahoo.com)  
Glenn Priest, **Organist & Choir Director**  
Zoey Ibarra, **Office Admin:** [admin@uccsarasota.com](mailto:admin@uccsarasota.com)  
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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**OFFICERS:** **Moderator:** Carol McCloud  
**Vice Moderator:** Ray Baker  
**Past Moderator:** Harold Mezile  
**Co-Treasurer:** Robin Reich  
**Co-Treasurer:** Roxanne Schwoch  
**Secretary:** Susan Moore

**Morning Meditations** posted every weekday: on Facebook &  
Pastor Wes' blog ~ [www.gracetraces.blogspot.com](http://www.gracetraces.blogspot.com)