

February 16, 2025 ~ 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)

Flowers given by: **Gregg Matthews**, Dedicated to love in our church

PRELUDE *Prelude in G Major, WTC I* J.S. Bach  
Dylan Rhodes, piano

ANTHEM *Praise the Lord* arr. Ralph Johnson  
Traditional Cameroon Melody

OPENING LITANY & PRAYER

One: In Christ there is no east or west, south or north,

**Many: No matter where we turn, no matter the direction or destination, Christ is there.**

One: Christ breaks down barriers and boundaries, blessing all with love.

**Many: Christ frees us from fear and frustration, liberating us for new life and justice.**

One: We gather in Christ's name, God's presence, empowered by the Spirit.

**Many: We commit to being the body of Christ today through listening, learning, leaning in, living in a way of respect and dignity for all.**

One: Let our hearts be open to transformation, let our souls be open to reconciliation, let our lives be guided by the formation of God's continued presence.

**Many: We gather to sing out our prayers and praise to God.**

OPENING HYMN: *I Woke Up this Morning* #85

**I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus, Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus, Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus, Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.**

**Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus, Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus, Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus, Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.**

OPENING PRAYER

**God of melodies, harmonies, dissonances that don't instantly resolve beautifully; God of all voices, even those that cannot carry a tune in a bucket, we come to You this day.**

**Thank you for waking us up, getting us up, building us up, cleaning and growing us up.**

**We need Thee every hour. You are the balm in Gilead to heal our weary, worn souls. Your sweet, sweet Spirit revives us every hour. Open our ears to hear Your truth that isn't always in concert with the world. Open our souls to be disrupted by Your Divine dance in which You call us to part-take. Let our worship be a moment overflowing with grace and love. Alleluia and Amen.**

ANTHEM *Song for Resolution: A Song for Mandela and de Klerk*  
Arranged by Paul Caldwell & Sean Ivory

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:1-15

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your God. “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret, and God who sees in secret will reward you. “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to God. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for God knows what you need. “Pray, then, in this way: Abba in heaven, may your name be revered as holy. May your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. “For if you forgive others their trespasses, God will also forgive you.

SERMON

*Faithfulness, forgiveness, fasting, generosity, & prayer*

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and The Casa del Sol Prayer of Jesus

**Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe, Your name is sacred, beyond speaking. May we know your presence, may your longings be our longings in heart and in action. May there be food for the human family today and for the whole earth community. Forgive us the falseness of what we have done as we forgive those who are untrue to us. Do not forsake us in our time of conflict but lead us into new beginnings. For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life are yours now and forever. Amen**

OFFERING/ANTHEM

*Praise His Holy Name*

by Keith Hampton

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\* CLOSING HYMN

*Syzohamba Naye*

trad. South African/arr. Taylor

The Choir will sing an anthem first, then the congregation will join singing verse

**We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God. We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God. We are marching (marching, we are marching), Oo, we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are praying in the light of God, we are praying in the light of God. We are praying in the light of God, we are praying in the light of God. We are praying (praying, we are praying), Oo, we are praying in the light of God.**

**We are singing in the light of God, we are singing in the light of God. We are singing in the light of God. We are singing (singing, we are singing), Oo, we are singing in the light of God.**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ February 16, 2025**

**We warmly welcome our Artist in Residence, Dr. Kevin Fenton.** Dr. Fenton is a Professor of Choral Conducting and Music Education at Florida State University College of Music. He was a Fulbright Specialist in Sub-Saharan Africa. The music for Sunday, February 16, will have a global theme. Dr. Fenton will be joined by accompanist **Dylan Rhodes** who is pursuing a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance.

**The Wayless Way Offering ~ Your Life as a Curriculum ~** Pastor Wes for a conversation on Richard Rohr's book, *Eager to Love* on Feb. 17 at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center or on Zoom. **Please read chapter 7 ~ end for Monday, February 17th. If you need the zoom link for the hybrid meeting, please let Pastor Wes know.**

**Drumming as a Spiritual Practice ~ Tuesday 2/18 at 3 p.m. ~** Chapel. Drums provided. New drummers welcome. Contact Lindsey Huddleston for more information (630-338-9294).

**Prayer Shawl Ministry ~ February 19 ~** calling all knitters and crocheters! Wednesday, February 19th from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Oasis Center. Come for creativity and conversation.

**Support Project 180 with sponsorship, or by attending the March 7<sup>th</sup> Strong Voices luncheon at Michael's on East.** The luncheon features national workforce development and prison education expert, Dr. Craig Miller (Pennsylvania College of Technology, affiliated with Penn State University), who promotes addressing our labor shortage (especially in the trades), through workforce development education among incarcerated and recently released returning citizens. According to the RAND Corporation, "incarcerated people who participate in education programs are 48 percent less likely to recidivate than those who do not." These findings are based on a recently updated, comprehensive study that analyzed rigorous research published from 1980 through 2017. Sponsorships are requested by February 14<sup>th</sup>. To purchase individual luncheon tickets, go online to **Project180reentry.org** click on Lecture and Buy Tickets for "Constructing a New Workforce" on March 7, 2025 at 11 a.m. ~ Questions? Contact: Barbara Smith-Bacon

**Food and Hunger Mission Group: *Taking Action to End Hunger* ~ New Volunteer Opportunity to provide "Daily Bread".** The Food and Hunger Group and Church Council recently approved having our church partner with Resurrection House to provide lunch on the first Thursday of every month. Sandy Smith has agreed to arrange the meals, and one to two volunteers are needed each month to help prepare and serve. To volunteer please call or email Carol Hagglund.

Peace and Justice invite you to join us on a private tour of ECHO Global Farm on **March 28 at 10:30 a.m.** We will meet at the church to carpool to the farm which is in Fort Myers. The cost of the tour is \$12.50. You are invited to bring a lunch. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Nancy McElroy at [nancymc2000@gamil.com](mailto:nancymc2000@gamil.com) by February 28<sup>th</sup>. ECHO global Farm researches and teaches small-scale, sustainable farming methods. Through the tour you will experience farming at its most creative. There are several different settings on the farm with crops, techniques, and animals from around the world. See [echonet.org](http://echonet.org) for more information.

**Looking Ahead – mark your calendars for March 30, the date of our 3rd Annual Chili Cook Off!** We are recruiting Chili Chefs to offer your best batch of chili on that Sunday, at 12:15 in Syster Hall. Let's have some new challengers to compete with our talented veteran chefs! The congregation will vote on their favorite, and the winner will receive a **modest** prize and lots of praise! If you would like to participate as a chef, please contact Sandy Smith 240-227-5121 (text or call).

**PASTOR WES IS TURNING 50 ON MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup>.** To share your words of wisdom with Pastor Wes, we have provided shamrock cutouts in the Narthex, and will be collecting these through Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. On Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will celebrate all with March birthdays and a PowerPoint of Wes' first 50 years will be shown. When asked what he wanted for his 50<sup>th</sup>, **“Bread for the World letters to support efforts in ending hunger”!** Last year we collected 70 letters for our church's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. These letters, and those of other like-minded churches, were hand delivered to our representatives. It's a big task to meet last year's goal and exceed it by 50, **we know we can do this!** This is what **DOING SOMETHING and FILLING THE BUCKETS OF OTHERS LOOKS LIKE.**

**Ash Wednesday Service is March 5<sup>th</sup> at noon in the chapel** (in person only for this service). Ashes will be available for those who wish. You are invited to center your heart/soul/life during the 40 days before Easter. **There will be an online prayer service at 6 p.m.** on Ash Wednesday as well. If you'd like the zoom link for the 6 p.m. prayer service, please let Pastor Wes know.

**You are invited to join in a meaningful conversation with Amanda Udis-Kessler at 11 a.m. on March 6 and 13 in the Oasis Center.** Amanda will be talking to us about the ways words create worlds, our language matters and makes a difference. Words have as many meanings as ears that hear. We will gather in the Oasis Center at 10:30 a.m. for refreshments on the 6<sup>th</sup> at 13<sup>th</sup>. Amanda will join us on zoom at 11 a.m. for conversation and presentation. This is a wonderful blessing for us to ponder how language shapes us. All are welcome.

**You are invited to the 98th Annual Conference of the Florida United Church of Christ Women. May 2-4 "Finding HOPE: Health - Opportunity - Purpose- Empowerment.** San Pedro Spiritual Development Center in Winter Park. Two of our scheduled presenters are wonderful authors who will definitely put a smile on your face. Tracy Smoak - author of "Who Brought the Dog to Church?" and several other devotional books. Liz Smith - author of "Be Brave. Lose the Beige: Finding your sass after sixty." There will also be a Panel of FL UCC women: Rev. Nayiri Karjian (Transitional Fl Conference Minister); Rev. Michelle Taylor (FL Conference Associate Minister); Rev. Vonshelle Beneby (FL Conference Board Moderator); Rachel Parker-McClendon & Bert Perry (Co-Chairs, FL UCC Women's Council); Dyanne Eds (FL Conference Board and FL UCC Women's Council member). There will be a few more LGBTQ+ speakers

from the Tallahassee church and Rev La'Trell Harrison (FL Conference Associate Minister) will speak at Sunday's worship service. To register, go to: <https://www.uccfla.org/meetings>

**Sacred Conversations on Race ~ February 26:** "The Mission to Safeguard Black History in the US" - TED Talk by Julieanne L. Richardson

March is Women's History Month. Lucy Hedrick will be chatting about and signing copies of her debut novel, *SIX WEEKS IN RENO*, on **Monday evening, March 10**, at the Sarasota Bookstore, 117 S. Pineapple. Her book tells the story of the little-known "divorce colony" in Reno, NV in the 1930s. The event begins at 6:00 p.m.

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **Sunday, February 16 ~ ONE Service!!!**

9 a.m. ~ Quiet time in the chapel for prayer

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online, Artist in Residence

Noon ~ Birthday Sunday

#### **Monday, February 17**

Growing and Caring Team, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Prayer Team, noon, Oasis Center and Zoom

*Eager to Love* Book Conversation (Chapter 7 ~ end), 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

#### **Tuesday, February 18**

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

#### **Wednesday, February 19**

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

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

#### **Thursday, February 20**

Green Team, 10 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Endowment Team, 1 p.m., Zoom

Alta Vista Family Night, 6 p.m., Alta Vista

#### **Saturday, February 22**

ASALH Monthly Membership Meeting, 9 a.m., Syster Hall

#### **Sunday, February 23 ~ Glenn Priest Organist**

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Greeter and Usher Training, Sanctuary