

January 12, 2025 ~ 11:00 a.m.
First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota

A decorative graphic featuring the word "BAPTISM" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered and surrounded by intricate, black, swirling lines that resemble water or stylized waves. The design is symmetrical and elegant, with the word "BAPTISM" being the central focus.

BAPTISM

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

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: In the beginning God and the watery chaos danced together, dreamed together, started to sing together a hymn of creation, creativity, and courage that we join our voices in sharing the good news of this day:

*OPENING HYMN

Shall We Gather at the River

#597

**Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God?**

Refrain: **Yes, we'll gather at the river, The beautiful, the beautiful river;
Gather with the saints at the river That flows by the throne of God.**

**On the margin of the river, washing up its silver spray,
We will walk and worship ever, All the happy golden day. *Refrain***

**As we reach the shining river, lay we every burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown. *Refrain***

**Soon we'll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease;
Soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace. *Refrain***

Lord, I Want to be a Christian

#454

**Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.**

**Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.**

**Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.**

**Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart. In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.**

*OPENING PRAYER

Leading, Loving, Laughing, Lamenting, Lavish God, we long to let Your light shine through us. We gather Sunday after Sunday studying about that good old way, the gospeling story You write in our hearts. And by Monday at 3 p.m., we have lost the thread and theme. It is easy to blame the world for leading us astray. But deep in our hearts, we know that what we search for is approval, acceptance, and affirmation. Help us God move from always wanting. Help us live our baptismal name of "Beloved" in

faithful, fun, and creative ways. Challenge us to be Your people in these days with a renewed Spirit that the world didn't give so the world can't take away. Amen.

*RESPONSE

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

#293

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord; there are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Refrain: **Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove, stay right here with us, filling us with your love; And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise. Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived when we shall leave this place.**

There are blessings you cannot receive till you know that Spirit's fullness and believe; you're the one to profit when you say, "I am going to stay with Jesus all the way." *Refrain*

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

SERMON

Drenched

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

And the Father Will Dance

Hayes

*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light, To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Spirit now we raise, Our joyful songs of thankful praise.**

*CLOSING HYMN

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

#82

Go, children, with my blessing, never alone; Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own; In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever, Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me; Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free. Here my Spirit's power filled you, here with tender comfort stilled you; Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune

David German

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ January 12, 2025

NEXT SUNDAY ~ January 19 ~ Did you know that January 23 is National Pie Day? This annual event was created in the 1970's simply to celebrate the pie. It is a day for all to cook (and eat) their favorite pies. So we invite you to celebrate early! **Bake (or if you buy a pie, we won't tell!) your favorite pie** and share it during Fellowship Hour, on **January 19, after the 11 a.m. service.** Just drop it off before the service, and we'll plate and serve it. **January 19** is also National Popcorn Day, so if you don't like pie (who doesn't like pie?), come and enjoy some popcorn. **PLUS ~** *please see below* for a special presentation by Revs. Drs. Sarah Melcher and Robert Shore-Goss.

The Wayless Way Offering ~ Your Life as a Curriculum ~ You are invited to explore your life ~ The event will be **hybrid** (in the Oasis Center and Zoom). **January 13th, 20th & 27th 4 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.** This week, we will learn more about Family Systems Theory (January 13th); Praying the Wayless Way (January 20th); and Listen/Discerning God in our Lives (January 27th). Please note, resources and recording from January 6 is available, please see Pastor Wes.

Prayer Shawl Ministry ~ Wednesday January 15th 2:00-3:30 p.m. in the Oasis Center Calling all knitters and crocheters! Come for creativity and conversation. Refreshments will be served. Contact Lindsey Huddleston (630-338-9294) for more information.

NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON JANUARY 18 ~ All the men of the congregation are invited to join for breakfast in Syster Hall. Coffee will be on at 8 a.m. and breakfast will be served at 8:30. After breakfast, Tara Maffei, Executive Director of Family Promise of Sarasota-Manatee, will share how her organization helps to ensure that children and their families have safe, stable housing. You may register by Thursday, January 16, by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

January 18 ~ Bobby Jo Valentine in concert at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary. Bobby Jo offers catchy songs with good tunes and intelligent, thoughtful lyrics in the tradition of Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens and Bruce Hornsby. A free-will offering to benefit ALSO Youth.

January 19th ~ Syster Hall @ Noon "The Church as Eco-System" Robert E. Shore-Goss and Sarah J. Melcher will speak on January 19th "The Church as Eco-System." We will explore the history of the land First Congregational United Church of Christ occupies, who lived here before us, how they cared for the land, and how we can live a sustainable present and future on the land the church occupies.

Drumming as a Spiritual Practice ~ Tues 1/21/25 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel. Drums will be provided. New drummers welcome. Contact Lindsey Huddleston for more information (630-338-9294).

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ January 22 at 3 p.m. ~ hybrid and Oasis Center. We will discuss *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*. ALL are welcome.

Be the CEO of your health ~ join **Lisa Kauffman**, one of our snowbirds, as she shares what she has learned through a certification program on movement, sleep, food, and stress. She will share here knowledge, tools, and confidence. Lisa will begin with a chair yoga session and leave plenty of time for Q and A. **We will gather in Syster Hall on January 23 at 11 a.m.**

The sanctuary will be open for you on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 20. This is a time of openness to God's guidance and presence.

ANNUAL MEETING ~ JANUARY 26TH ~ Noon ~ Sanctuary or Livestreamed This year at our annual meeting we will vote on: ***Financial Reports 2024, Budget 2025, Nominating Report (Leadership Team) 2025.*** We will celebrate the work of this past year: Sacred Conversations on Race, Bible Study, Artful Prayer, Drumming, Choir, worship, new members, and the vital/vibrant Spirit that guides our church. The Annual Report will be posted on the website **January 12th**. Financials are available via email or in the church office. Paper ballots are available in the office to vote beforehand. Questions? See Moderator Harold Mezile.

This is an **Open Invitation to All** to attend this year's **Leadership Retreat on Saturday, February 1, in Syster Hall.** We are excited to welcome **Carol McCloud, the famous author of the Bucket-Filling Book Series,** to lead us in a memorable exercise. You are welcome to join us for fellowship and refreshments beginning at 8:45. You will meet your 2025 moderator team, be led in prayer by Pastor Wes, and participate in a listening/sharing activity before we turn our morning over to Carol at 9:40. This is a wonderful opportunity to start our church year—filled with examples of kindness, compassion, and love. Did you know Carol has sold over 3 million copies of her books that appear in over 12 languages? Come, be inspired. Team meetings and pictures will start at 11:00.

Sunday, February 2nd ~ Noon ~ Syster Hall ~ Yoleidy Rosario-Hernandez, program director of ASALH Freedom School. The Manasota ASALH Freedom School is a free, community-based Saturday program dedicated to enriching students' reading and literacy skills while providing comprehensive education on Black history. She will present, "Why do we need Freedom School? What do we teach? Lunch will be provided.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 12, 2025 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist

9 a.m. ~ Worship, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ COLLAGE, Syster Hall

Monday, January 13, 2025

Wayless Way Gathering, 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Tuesday, January 14

COLLAGE Exec Team, 10 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Peace and Justice Group, 3 p.m., Oasis Center
Tuesday Night Bible Study, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

Wednesday, January 15

Prayer Shawl Ministry, 2 p.m., Oasis Center
Bible Study, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, January 16

Mission Team, 1 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Saturday, January 18

Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m., Syster Hall
Bobby Jo Valentine Concert, 3 p.m., Sanctuary

Sunday, January 19, 2025 ~ Glenn Priest organist ~ Dr. King Sunday

9 a.m. ~ Worship, Chapel
11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online
Noon ~ Presentation by Revs. Drs. Sarah Melcher & Bob Shore-Goss
Service for Rev. Dr. Robert Bryant, 1:30 p.m., Chapel

Upcoming:

Service for Karen Barber ~ Saturday, January 25 at 11 p.m.