

March 16, 2025 ~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



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

www.uccsarasota.com

Flowers given by: Susan Moore, *“In Memory of husband, Bill Moore.”*

PRELUDE *I Need Thee Every Hour* by Robert Lowry, arr. M. Hayes

One: God of Eve,
Many: Grant us life, curiosity, and honesty in these days.
One: God of Sarah,
Many: Help us find moments to let loose with prayerful laughter.
One: God of Deborah,
Many: Open our ears to the women who lead us with vision and hope.
One: God of Ruth,
Many: Grant us courage to raise our voices and roll up our sleeves.
One: God of Mary,
Many: Grant us soul space to be the bearer of God’s presence each day.
One: For all the women whose fingerprints form and fashion us in Your way.
Many: God of all to You we raise this our prayer and praise this day.

*OPENING HYMN *Sing a New World into Being* *see insert*

**Sing a new world into being, sound a bold and hopeful theme.
Find a tune for silent yearnings, lend your voice and dare to dream.
Dream a church where all who worship find their lives and loves belong.
Sing a new world into being, sing as Christ inspires your song.**

**Sing a new world into being, where each gender class and race.
Brings its rainbow gifts and colors to God’s limitless embrace.
Where the lines that once divided form instead the ties that bind.
Sing a new world into being. Risk transforming heart and mind.**

**Sing a new world into being, where the homeless find a home.
Where no children ever hunger, but are filled with God’s shalom.
Where all people work for justice, where all hate and vengeance cease.
Sing a new world into being, raise the harmonies of peace.**

**Sing a new world into being, Join the ancient prophets’ cry.
For a time of health and plenty, when all tears have been wiped dry.
When compassion flows like waters, pouring balm for all who grieve.
Sing a new world into being, live the promise you believe.**

*OPENING PRAYER

Seamstress God, You knit us together with threads of compassion, courage, and conviction. Holy Artist, Your creativity renews and restores us. You sing to us a song of healing and wholeness. We pray today for those who are devalued, dismissed, and discriminated against. We confess that too often we silently stand on the sidelines and feel powerless to act. God in the coming days, weeks, and months let us lean into and listen for

Your alto, soprano voice. Infuse and inspire us as You have people of faith over the ages. In Your many names. Amen.

*RESPONSE

Spirit, Open My Heart (vs. 2 & 3)

see insert

Refrain: Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving. Spirit, open my heart.

Write you love upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story. In each thought, word, and deed, may my living bring you glory. Refrain.

May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of sister, brother. In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another. Refrain.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 13:10-17, NRSVUE

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." ¹³ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴ But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

SERMON

Standing Upright

Rev. Ellen Marsey

SPECIAL MUSIC

I'm Doing It Today!

Rev. Dr. Ed Deyton, guitar

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.

OFFERING/ANTHEM

I Will Arise

arr. Alice Parker & Robert Shaw

*DOXOLOGY

New Gloria

Glory be the source of all things. To Jesus the Christ. To the Great Spirit. From our beginnings to the time beyond our life may the light and love never end. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN *Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You* #562

Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me, gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free, now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away, now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!

Take the fruit that I have gathered from the tree your Spirit sowed, harvest of your own compassion, juice that makes the wine of God, spiced with humor, laced with laughter – flavor of the Jesus life, tang of risk and new adventure, taste and zest beyond belief.

Take whatever I can offer gifts that I have yet to find, skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind, things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be: take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* arr. D. Bish

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ March 16, 2025

TODAY ~ We are delighted to welcome **Rev. Ellen Marsey** to share with us her sermon on our scripture passage. Ellen is the leader of our Food and Hunger Group and worked tirelessly on organizing our Mission Fair today with Jan Andersen and Barbara Smith-Bacon!! Our guest musician is the **Rev. Dr. Ed Deyton**. He received his M. Div. and Ph. D. from Drew University and, before retirement, served United Methodist churches in the New England area (two of which were also UCC affiliated). His vocation within a vocation has been writing songs in the folk-rock genre, with particular attention to unsung stories of the Bible, and building bands for churches.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC MISSION FAIR *Hosted by Missions and Peace & Justice Sunday, March 16th after Worship in Syster Hall.* COME and ENJOY food, drinks, and fellowship. ENGAGE with staff and volunteers from non-profit organizations. LEARN about their mission and volunteer opportunities for ways to support their work. Come and learn how we can live out Matthew 25:40 ...*then Jesus will say, "I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me."*

The Wayless Way Offering ~ On March 17th at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center and Zoom, we will be discussing Brian McLaren's book, *Faith After Doubt*. This is a wonderful book to help you explore your faithfulness and commitment to justice these days.

Drumming as Spiritual Practice ~ March 18th at 3 p.m. ~ Chapel. Drums provided. New drummers welcome. Contact Lindsey Huddleston (630) 338-9294.

You are invited on March 19th at 2 p.m. to a Community Resilience conversation in our Sanctuary. Leadership from SRQ Strong, Samaritan Counseling Center, ALSO Youth, ASALH,

and congregations will come together to listen, learn, and love one another in this tumultuous time of transitions, grief, and trauma. ***Please plan to attend and bring a friend!!***

Singing our Prayers During Lent, March 20th at 4 p.m. ~ Chapel, *Led by Greg Chestnut.* Throughout the wilderness of Lent, you are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. Join us in singing our prayers with moments of silence and reflection. Beautiful prose will allow us to wonder and wander into the wilderness to meet God's love.

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ On March 26th: "What About Those?" - a poem by Gloudis Whiteside. **On April 9th:** "Don't Take the Exit on People" - TED Talk by Justin Jones-Fosu. **On April 23rd:** "Police Brutality and the Less Conspicuous Ways Racism Kills" - TED Talk by Oscar Holmes IV.

Peace and Justice invite you to join us on a private tour of ECHO Global Farm on **March 28th at 10:30 a.m.** We will meet at the church to carpool to the farm in Fort Myers. The cost of the tour is \$12.50. You are invited to bring your lunch. Any questions, contact Nancy McElroy at nancymc2000@gmail.com. ECHO Global Farm researches and teaches sustainable farming.

Scholarship applications are now being accepted. Visit www.uccsarasota.com to view the new look and/or apply. The deadline for completed applications is **April 15th**.

March 30th is BRING a FRIEND to Church Sunday. You are invited to bring a neighbor, family member, or friend with you on March 30th. As part of the service, we will honor our guests. We are blessed by a **Jazz Trio of Don & Deb Smith and Gary Dowty** playing during worship as well as during the chili cookoff after 11 a.m. Thank you to **Liz Early and our Worship Team** for this fabulous idea.

3rd Annual Chili Cook Off, March 30th! We are recruiting Chili Chefs to offer their best batch of chili on that Sunday, at 12:15 p.m., 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, (340) 227-5121.

Tour of Embracing Our Differences ~ Racial Justice Mission Group is sponsoring a free docent-guided tour of the 2025 Embracing Our Differences exhibit on **Wednesday, April 2nd**, at Bayfront Park. Our church is a co-sponsor of the art panel titled "DUMPYARD FOOTBALL." For those who wish to ride the church bus, we will board at the church at 12:45 p.m. and leave at 1 p.m., returning by 3 p.m. Pauline Geary will be our driver. Please text Sheila Gossett to make a bus reservation as space is limited or to tell her you will attend independently. Please tell Sheila if you can drive people from the church should we have an overflow on the bus. Eat lunch before you come as we will not be eating lunch together. **Everyone will meet at the entry arch to the park at 1:20 p.m. as the tour begins at 1:30 p.m.** Questions? Call Lindsey Huddleston.

A brief congregational meeting will be held following worship on April 6th. 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 modification is requested by the Church Council and refers to the scheduling of the Annual Meeting. As currently stated in the By-laws, the Church Council, at its December meeting, is required to determine and set the Annual Meeting date in January. The Church Council has approved and is requesting a By-law change to add the words or February. The relevant By-law statement would thus 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....” **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....”**

THIS WEEK

Sunday, March 16 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Mission Fair

Monday, March 17

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

Prayer Circle, noon, Oasis Center and Zoom

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

Tuesday, March 18

Drumming as a Spiritual Practice, 3 p.m., Chapel

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

Wednesday, March 19

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

Community Resilience Meeting, 2 p.m., Sanctuary

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, March 20

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

Singing Our Prayers, 4 p.m., Chapel

Sunday, March 23 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Endowment Sunday presentation