

March 2, 2025 ~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



Holy Communion

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

www.uccsarasota.com

If you want peace, let women take the lead ~ Desmond Tutu

Flowers given by: Betty Schattschneider, Nancy Arnzen & the Worship Team in honor of Pastor Wes' 50th birthday and Lucy Hedrick in honor of granddaughter **Isla Jane Hedrick's 10th birthday.**

PRELUDE *Mvt. IV, Adagio from Organ Symphony #V* by Ch. M. Widor

LITANY *by Rev. Liz Testa from Common Prayer*

Wes: We gather in the company of the women who have gone before, mothers and sisters of the faith, both named and unnamed,

Many: They are the judges, the prophets, the martyrs, the warriors, poets, lovers and Saints.

Lydia: Who are near to us in the shadow of awareness, in the crevices of memory, in the landscape of our dreams.

Many: We gather in the company of Deborah, who governed the Israelites with wisdom and strength.

Christine: We gather in the company of Esther, who used her position as Queen to ensure the welfare of her people.

Many: We gather in the company of you whose names have been lost and silenced, who kept and cradled the wisdom of the ages.

Wes: We gather in the company of Mary Magdalene, who wept at the empty tomb until the risen Christ appeared.

Many: We gather in the company of Phoebe, who led an early church in the shadow of the Roman empire.

Lydia We gather in the company of Julian of Norwich, who wed imagination and theology proclaiming, "All shall be well."

Many: We gather in the company of Sojourner Truth, who stood against oppression, righteously declaring "Ain't I a woman?!" in 1852.

Christine: We gather in the company of the Argentine Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who turned their grief to strength, standing together to remember "the disappeared" children of war with a holy indignation.

Many: We gather in the company of Alice Walker, who named the lavender hue as evidence of the Holy.

Lydia: We stand on the shoulders of Antoinette Brown Blackwell the first ordained woman in the UCC on September 15, 1853.

Many: We gather in the company of all Mothers and Sisters of the faith, who teach us to resist evil with boldness, to lead with wisdom and strength, and to heal with compassion and love.

*HYMN

Womb of Life and Source of Being

#274

Womb of life, and source of being, home of every restless heart, in your arms the worlds awakened; you have loved us from the start. We, your children, gather 'round you, at the table you prepare. Sharing stories, tears, and laughter, we are nurtured by your care.

Word in flesh, our brother Jesus, born to bring us second birth, you have come to stand beside us, knowing weakness, knowing earth. Priest who shares our human struggles, Life of Life and Death of Death, Risen Christ, come stand among us, send the Spirit by your breath.

Brooding Spirit, move among us; be our partner, be our friend. When our memory fails, remind us whose we are, what we intend. Labor with us, aid the birthing of the new world yet to be, Free of servant, lord, and master, free for love and unity.

Mother, Brother, holy Partner; Father, Spirit, Only Son: we would praise your name forever, one-in-three, and three-in-one. We would share your life, your passion, share your word of world made new, Ever singing, every praising, one with all, and one with you.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 15:21-28, NRSVUE

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

SERMON

Where is an Editor When You Need One?

OFFERING/ANTHEM

Come to the Table of the Lord

Sally Albrecht/Jay Althouse

*DOXOLOGY/PRAAYER OF DEDICATION

tune O Waly, Waly

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

Rev. Marilyn Lewis

One: May the God of whoever and how-so-ever be with You.

Many: And also with you.

One: Open your hearts, minds, souls, and whole lives,

Many: We come with hunger and thirst for this holy meal.

One: May you sense your belovedness at this table.

Many: We prayerfully taste who and whose we are in the grace of bread and juice.

SOLO

Time Now to Gather

Lauren Patsos, soprano

The ushers will invite you to come forward with the center aisle holding your hands in the form of a cup, receive a bread and 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 LORD'S PRAYER (NEW ZEALAND VERSION)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

*CLOSING HYMN

At the Table of the Holy

See Insert

At the table of the Holy there is bread enough for all. There's a cup of endless blessing that reminds us of our call. We are fed and we are nourished. As we drink, we quench our thirst. At the table of the holy those in need are seated first.

We remember Jesus healing on the day he used a slur as he told a Gentile woman that his bread was not for her. In her answer came a challenge, a reminder of the good. As she pled for understanding, Jesus learned and understood.

Gentle God of second chances, may we offer more than crumbs. May we live your sacred vision: love for all, not just for some. Move our hearts to full repentance when we get your welcome wrong that our hands may cease withholding and our voices share your song.

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Marilyn Lewis

POSTLUDE

Nearer My God to Thee

Lowell Mason, arr. Diane Bish

Greeter/Ushers:

Jeannie & Gib Mitchell, Cheryl Beller, Evelyn Crooks,
Joan Faucher and Valerie Fields

Liturgist:

Lydia Ubry, Dr. Christine Hoffman, Jane Delgado-Semidei

Bus Driver:

Page & Carol McCloud

Emergencies:

Barb Shaver

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ March 2, 2025

Birthday Sunday after worship today! We will be writing letters to ask our congressman to support Bread for the World's 2025 campaign - "Nourish our Future." Now, more than

ever, it is important to ask our Congress to support efforts to fight childhood hunger, from the womb through college. **A letter takes a little over 5 minutes to write.**

TODAY ~ 30th Annual Choir Festival ~ Church of the Palms Sanctuary (3224 Bee Ridge Rd) “Praise God with Music”. This *free* musical event is under the direction of our **own Jane Hunder**. A love offering will be taken.

You are invited to our monthly UCC luncheon on Tuesday, March 4th at 11:30 a.m. Cost of the lunch is \$15. Our own **Lynn Jones** will present a program on “Women in the United Church of Christ...from Antoinette Brown to Today”. Antoinette Brown was the first woman ordained in the Congregational Church in 1853. This will be a great presentation about the beginnings of UCC Women to today. We will also welcome Rachel Parker McClendon from Tallahassee. Rachel will provide information about FL UCC Women's Council and her perspective on our denomination.

Drumming as a Spiritual Practice ~ March 4th and March 18th at 3 p.m. ~ Chapel. Drums provided. New drummers welcome. Contact Lindsey Huddleston (630-338-9294).

Ash Wednesday Service is March 5th 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 6th and 13th in the Oasis Center. Amanda will be talking to us about the ways words create worlds and how 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. 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.

“Feeding the World Takes All of Us!” Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO Bread for the World March 6th ~ 6:30 p.m. Church of the Palms (3224 Bee Ridge Rd) Free Admission ~ Rev. Cho will address global food insecurity and the intersection of faith and politics.

Support Project 180 with sponsorship, or by attending the March 7th Strong Voices luncheon at Michael's on East. The luncheon features national workforce development and prison education expert, Dr. Craig Miller who promotes addressing our labor shortage through workforce development education among incarcerated and recently released returning citizens. To purchase individual luncheon tickets, go online to Project180reentry.org click on Lecture. Buy Tickets for “Constructing a New Workforce” on March 7, 2025, at 11 a.m. ~ Questions? Contact: Barbara Smith-Bacon

FREE Florida State University Singers Concert on March 8th at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

NEW MEMBER LUNCHEON March 9th, Noon ~ Oasis Center. Are you considering joining our church? Please join us for a light lunch and conversation. All are welcome. **Please RSVP by calling the church office.**

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

The Wayless Way Offering ~ On March 10th and 17th in the Oasis Center and Zoom at 4 p.m., 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.

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ March 12: "Intersectionality: Feminism Wasn't Made for Black Women" - TED Talk by Ephrata Tesfaye; and Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" recited by Priscilla Crumel. **March 26th:** "What About Those?" - a poem by Gloudis Whiteside. **Men's Breakfast is March 15** ~ Come at 8 a.m. for coffee and fellowship. Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. **Please RSVP by calling the church office.**

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 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."*

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 ~ 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.

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@gamil.com. ECHO Global Farm researches and teaches sustainable farming.

Looking Ahead – Mark your calendars for March 30th, the date of our 3rd Annual Chili Cook Off! We are recruiting Chili Chefs to offer their 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, 340-227-5121.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, March 2 ~ Glenn Priest Organist, Communion and Food Pantry Sunday

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Birthday Sunday and **Bread for the World Letter Offering!**

Monday, March 3

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

Tuesday, March 4

First UCC Women Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

Lunch at 11:30 a.m., Syster Hall

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

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

Wednesday, March 5

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

Ash Wednesday Service, Noon, Chapel

Ash Wednesday Online, 6 p.m., Zoom

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, March 6

Zoom with Amanda Udis-Kessler, 10:30 a.m., Oasis and Zoom

Plymouth Harbor Circle Meeting, 2 p.m., MacNeil Chapel

Rev. Eugene Cho at Church of the Palms, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 8

FSU Singers in Concert, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

Sunday, March 9 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ COLLAGE Lunch, Syster Hall

Noon ~ New Member luncheon, Oasis Center