

March 9, 2025 ~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



*Wrapped
in
Prayer*

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

www.uccsarasota.com

March 9, 2025

11:00 a.m.

Flowers given by: Rosanne Blumenberg, Diane Reed & George Reed in loving memory of our parents, **George & Dorothy Reed**

PRELUDE

Gabriels Oboe

by Ennio Morricone

INVITATION to WORSHIP

Inspired by Nancy C. Townley in Ministry Matters

One: Come into God's presence with thanksgiving.

Many: Serve the Loving One with gladness.

One: Know that God is here in this place.

Many: Let our praise resound.

One: Come, let us worship the ever-present God.

Many: Let us celebrate God's astounding love for us with song and prayer.

*OPENING HYMN

Love Astounding

see insert

Love astounding, Love confounding limits fearful minds impose. Love renewing, Love pursuing every heart until it knows. Love's transforming, healing goodness, Love's abiding gentle grace, Love's endurance, Love's assurance, Love's consoling strong embrace.

Love receiving, Love believing, we rejoice with thanks and song, faith regaining, hope proclaiming; Love has taught us, we belong, safe within Love's tender keeping, safe from fear's persistent call. Love defending, Love unending, Love of God enfolding all.

*OPENING PRAYER: (*Source: Tané Theron, Ravenswood School for Girls*)

As we pray, find an edge of your sleeve or seam to touch in honor of the brave, bold woman who touches the fray of Jesus' prayer shawl.

God, today we honor the women of all times and places, women of courage, women of hope, women of suffering, women of mourning. Women living fully, women experiencing joy, women delighting in life, women knowing the interconnectedness of the human family. Women promoting human flourishing, women boldly leading the transformation of unjust global structures, women seeking and sharing wisdom and love. God, we celebrate your faithfulness and love which works for the flourishing and full humanity of all women everywhere. We know that whatever denies or distorts the full humanity is not of God. Help us, throughout Lent, be caught up in the hard, holy work of reaching out to all who are hanging on by a thread and have been pushed to the fray. In the name of the One who reached out with care to all, Jesus the Christ.

*RESPONSE

Jesus Loves Me (verses 1 & 3)

NCH#327

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! Still today, walking with me on my way, wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Mark 5:25-34, *the Message*

A woman who had suffered a condition of hemorrhaging for twelve years—a long succession of physicians had treated her, and treated her badly, taking all her money and leaving her worse off than before—had heard about Jesus. She slipped in from behind and touched his robe. She was thinking to herself, “If I can put a finger on his robe, I can get well.” The moment she did it, the flow of blood dried up. She could feel the change and knew her plague was over and done with. At the same moment, Jesus felt energy discharging from him. He turned around to the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?” His disciples said, “What are you talking about? With this crowd pushing and jostling you, you’re asking, ‘Who touched me?’ Dozens have touched you!” But he went on asking, looking around to see who had done it. The woman, knowing what had happened, knowing she was the one, stepped up in fear and trembling, knelt before him, and gave him the whole story. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you’re healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague.”

SERMON

On the Fringe

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

O Love

Elaine Hagenberg

*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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**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**

*CLOSING HYMN

When We Must Bear Persistent Pain

see insert

When we must bear persistent pain and suffer with no cure in sight, come, Holy Presence, breathe your peace with gift of warmth and healing light.

Support us as we learn new ways to care for bodies newly frail. Help us endure, and live and love. Hear our complaint when patience fails.

We thank you for the better days when we may smile to greet the sun, to do your work with clearing mind, and bless your name when day is done.

In ease or pain, in life and death, to you our fragile lives belong, and so we trust you in all things. You are our hope, our health, our song.

*BENEDICTION

Praise to the Lord

by Craig Phillips

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ March 9, 2025

COLLAGE ~ You are welcome after church to a conversation with **Declan Sheehy**, Chief Development officer of Senior Friendship Center. This local resource offers adult day care with engaging activities for seniors with cognitive or medical issues, friendly referral services, and caregiver resources. Come and learn more today.

TODAY ~ NEW MEMBER LUNCHEON in the Oasis Center. Are you considering joining our church? Please join us for a light lunch and conversation. All are welcome.

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.

March is Women's History Month. Lucy Hedrick will be 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.

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.

You are invited to join in a meaningful conversation with Amanda Udis-Kessler at 11 a.m. on March 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.

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.**

NEXT SUNDAY ~ 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."*

Next Sunday, we welcome The Rev. Ellen Marsey as part of our celebration of Women's History Month to preach as well as guest musician **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.

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.

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**.

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

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 & Sue 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 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 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

Monday, March 10

Facilities and Grounds Team meeting, 1 p.m., Oasis and Zoom

Tuesday, March 11

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

Wednesday, March 12

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

Worship Team meeting, 1 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, March 13

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

Ready Readers, Noon, Oasis Center

Finance Team, 2 p.m., Zoom

Spiritual Education and Growth, 3 p.m., Zoom

Saturday, March 15

Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m., Syster Hall

Sunday, March 16 ~ Glenn Priest, Organist

9 a.m. ~ Morning Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Mission Fair