

November 10, 2024 ~ 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



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

www.uccsarasota.com

Flowers given by: **Page and Carol McCloud**, in celebration of **Pastor Wes**

PRELUDE

Sinfonia

J. S. Bach arr. H. Whitford

INVITATION to WORSHIP

By Kate Bowler

Blessed are you standing among the ruins of a faith
that once felt so sturdy,
now turned to dust under your feet.

The certainty you once had, gone.

The community you loved, dissipated.

The hope you held dear, hard to find.

Instead, what's taken up residence

is the very stuff that seems counter
to what you imagined:

Disappointment. Doubt. Disillusionment. Despair.

In this new landscape, may you practice the courage to find the others
who make space for your questions without easy answers,

who celebrate doubt when it makes room for more faith,

who search high and low for a defiant hope born amidst despair.

Bless you, dear one. You who don't give up wrestling.

who have eyes to see something new being rebuilt on top of what was.

Blessed are you who walk away wounded, yes and changed.

*OPENING HYMN

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

#472

**Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light: Take my hand, precious
Lord, lead me home.**

**When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near, when my life is almost gone, Hear
me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me
home.**

**When the shadows appear and the night draws near, and the day is past and gone, At the
river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

*OPENING PRAYER

**God, we gather in this sacred space that vibrates with moments of tears, laughter,
heartbreak, and joyful celebrations. This sacred space hums with the holy lives of Your
people. We are rooted in our ancestors who salvaged bricks from the Tampa courthouse;
founded Plymouth Harbor, Orchard Place, and New College; built Habitat Homes and
formed a food pantry; collaborated with our neighbors to do justice through Sarasota
United for Responsibility and Equity. And we know that You are not finished with us yet
God. We pray we will follow Your way of love in these days. Stretch us to live our
covenants and embody our core values. Stir our sacred imaginations to new ways of**

offering prayer and praise. Fling open the doors of our hearts to share the good news to others and welcome a first-time guest as a cherished friend. Help us be Your church in such a time as this for we dedicate all we are and all we do to Your glory and to be part-takers in Your vision. Amen.

*RESPONSE

God of Grace and God of Glory (vs. 1, 2, & 5)

#436

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power; crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.

From the evils that surround us and assail the Savior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us – free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days, for the living of these days.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore; let the search for your salvation be our glory evermore. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage serving you whom we adore, serving you whom we adore.

PAUSE to BREATHE and BE

Inhale: Eternal Light

Exhale: Guide us in Your way

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40, *selected verses*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass; their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers; the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Awake to God, God will feed God's flock like a shepherd; and carry us in God's bosom and gently lead the mother sheep. Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

SERMON

Comfort?!?

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

Pilgrims' Hymn

Stephen Paulus

*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**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

In the Midst of New Dimensions

#391

**In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples, wandering in their separate ways?
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and every, now and ever, now and ever more.**

**Though the flood of starving people, warring factions, and despair,
Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and every, now and ever, now and ever more.**

**As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village, might envision wilder dreams.
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and every, now and ever, now and ever more.**

**We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young,
Each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and every, now and ever, now and ever more.**

**Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again.
God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and every, now and ever, now and ever more.**

*BENEDICTION

Ain't Going to be 70 No More

Susan Moore

POSTLUDE

God of Grace

Paul Manz

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ November 10, 2024

Today, please join us in Syster Hall following the 11 a.m. worship for ice cream sundaes.

If you had a candle lit for a saint last Sunday, the candles and angels will be available today in the narthex. You can light the candle any time you need to feel God's love. You can light the candle on your beloved's birthday, anniversary, or times when the tears come like tidal waves.

Thank you to our Growing and Caring Team for making the angels with love!

Next Sunday, November 17, is our Stewardship celebration Sunday. As you prayerfully fill out your intention of giving/pledge card please remember the testimonies of Gregg Matthews, Jane Delgado-Semidei, and Jane Hunder. Our theme this year plays with the image of filling a bucket. This is not just filling an offering plate, but your life. We pray that our church fills your bucket in life-giving and life-changing ways. We pray you go forth to fill other's buckets each day. **Next Sunday, we will also welcome new members to the church!!**

The Women's Association is looking for their **red and white Christmas tablecloths**. Perhaps someone took them home to launder them? If found, Jane Hunder will tell you where to put them. We will be setting up our Christmas tables on Monday, December 3. **Thank you!!**

Candlelight Concert in our Chapel on Sunday, December 1 at 7 p.m. featuring Marelina Suchocka on vibraphone and Phoebe Powell on harp. Cost of the ticket is \$10 and will be on sale on Sundays after worship.

NOVEMBER BOOK STUDY: *Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr~If you would like to join the conversation, please see Jim Butterworth or call the church office.

Our Sacred Conversations on Race continues the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in Oasis and Zoom at 3 p.m. **Next gathering on November 12th at 3 p.m.** ~ we will be discussing resources from Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative.

Opportunities to Share God's Love this Thanksgiving and Christmas Season: There will be **four ways** to share God's love in November and December ~

- 1. Angel Tree Gift Tags** ~ Available November 10th ~ Tags will be available for in-person pickup after the 9 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services on November 10th. Should you not be present to get a tag, please contact Sandy Smith. Deliver your gifts to the church before/after worship on Sunday or during the week, Monday – Thursday.
- 2. Toy Drive for Alta Vista School** ~ Let's Be a Good Neighbor ~ November 11th to December 5th. The children range from ages 4 to 11. While shopping for our Angel Tree or young family members, could you include a board game, book, Legos or a doll to bring to church? You will find a gift box in the Narthex in which to place your gifts. They do not need to be wrapped.
- 3. First UCC Women ~ Christmas Bag program** ~ we offer gifts of personal hygiene and stationery to Orchard Place residence (which our church established) and through Meals on Wheels. A full list can be found in the narthex. **All items should be NEW!!**
- 4. Christmas Love** ~ every year our Mission Team reaches out to offer financial gifts to organizations in our community who share God's love. More information will be shared in the December newsletter and in worship.

Artful Prayer ~ November 14th @ 2 p.m. ~ Reed Chapel In-Person Only ~ This hybrid workshop, "Singing that Builds Community" led by **Greg Chestnut**, invites us to reconnect with singing as generations before us have done. In ancient times, congregational songs and folk hymns were led without printed music in the hands of the singer. Singing "by ear" can become a powerful spiritual practice as we explore themes of prayer, justice, nature, healing, hope, and community. Join with others as we create and engage in ways to contribute to our common life through song.

Please join us on November 14 at 7 p.m. for the showing of Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes. This is a film by Byron Hurt (son-in-law of Jim and Priscilla Crumel). Mr. Hurt will be here to show the documentary and answer questions. This movie has received critical acclaim and praise. We are blessed to have the director here and hope you will join our Racial Justice Mission Group for this powerful evening!

NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON NOVEMBER 16 ~ The UCC Men's breakfast series continues Saturday, November 16 and all the men of the congregation are invited to join for breakfast in Syster Hall then. Coffee will be on at 8 am and breakfast served at 8:30 am. Dick Miller will be our chef this month and, after breakfast, Dale Moore will lead a discussion based on his new book, Chatroom with God. You may register by Thursday, November 14 by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

The SURE (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity) Community Problems Assembly has been rescheduled for **November 18 at 6 p.m. at Pine Shores Presbyterian** (6135 Beechwood Ave, Sarasota, FL 34231).

Drumming as a Spiritual Practice meets the first and third Tuesday in the **Chapel**. Our next meeting is on **Tues 11/19 at 3:00pm**. **New drummers are welcome**; drums are provided.

Prayer Shawl Ministry - November 20 ~ Calling all knitters and crocheters! The next gathering of the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group will be on Wednesday, November 20, from 2:00- 3:30 pm at the church Oasis Center. We meet the third Wednesday of the month. Please come join us for creativity and conversation. Contact Lindsey Huddleston at 630-338-9294 with questions.

You are invited to the Transgender Day of Remembrance on Wednesday November 20 at 4:30 PM ~ the event will take place at Trinity MCC. This is a holy time for our community to speak the names of those transgender siblings who have lost their lives this year because of hate. Let us all be a part of ensuring that lives lost in hate are never silenced or forgotten.

Our Safety Team announces CPR training on Thursday, November 21st at 6 p.m. in the Oasis Center. We have space for 5 more participants. If you would be interested, please contact Joan Faucher at 941-915-9128 to sign up. The next class will be in Feb. 2025, dates to TBA.

Facilities and Grounds invite you to a Fall Clean Up Day on **Saturday, November 23rd at 8:30 a.m.** We will weed the gardens and spruce up the campus before the holidays. Many hands make light the work. Please bring gloves, gardening tools, and a willing spirit to help.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, November 10 ~ 70th Anniversary Celebration

9 a.m. ~ Early Service, Sanctuary

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Celebration of 70 Years, Syster Hall

Monday, November 11

Falling Upward Book Study, 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Tuesday, November 12

Staffing Team, 3 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Tuesday Night Bible Study, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

Wednesday, November 13

Bible Study, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, November 14

Mission Team, 1 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Artful Prayer, 2 p.m., Chapel only
Finance Team, 3 p.m., Zoom
Handbell Choir, 6 p.m., Chapel

Saturday, November 16

Men's Breakfast, 8:30 a.m., Syster Hall

Sunday, November 17 ~ Stewardship Sunday

9 a.m. ~ Early Service, Sanctuary
11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online
Noon ~ Fellowship Time