

November 24, 2024 ~ 11:00 a.m.
First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



PRAISE

AND

THANKSGIVING

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

Flowers given by: **Harold & Peggy Mezile**, in celebration of our anniversary

PRELUDE *Praise The Lord with Drums and Cymbals* Karg-Elert arr. Brantigan
Gianluca Farina and Morgen Low, trumpet; Hugo Bliss, horn; Brad Williams, trombone; Nate
Seman, tuba; and Matt Kibort, timpani

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: God is like a cornucopia overflowing with beautiful diversity,

Many: **We delight in bright oranges of pumpkins that call our creativity to carve a face.**

One: For bumps and lumps on winter squash that tell us that perfection is not the point,

Many: **We gather to sing out to all Sarasota our hymns of praise.**

One: Come, ye thankful people, come.

Many: **Let us join in celebrating our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Alleluia and Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN

Festival Hymn of Thanksgiving

arr. Paul Sjolund

**We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing
Sing praises to His name; he forgets not His own.**

**Beside us to guide us, Our God with us joining
Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord was at our side, all glory be Thine.**

**We all do extoll Thee, Thou leader triumphant,
And pray that Thou still our defender will be.
Let Thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free.**

**With voices united our praises we offer;
To Thee in thanksgiving, glad anthems we raise.
Thy strong arm will guide us, through all Thou art beside us;
To Father, Son and Spirit, forever be praise!**

*OPENING PRAYER

God, You long to leave Your imprint upon our lives. You seek to make a home in our hearts. We confess that cynicism, criticism, constant consumerism has emptied us of play. We have become stale and stagnant with somberness. Let the music renew us, let Your rhythm restore us, and let Your voice provoke our praise in new ways. Help us contribute and collaborate with Your unfolding sacred symphony happening here in this place. With praise and thanksgiving for Your love that never lets us go and reminds us we are never alone. Amen.

READING of the MAYFLOWER COMPACT

ANTHEM

Rejoice O Pilgrim Throng

Robert J. Powell

PAUSE to BREATHE and BE

Inhale: *For this one breath*

Exhale: *Remind us we are enough.*

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 52

Awake; awake; put on your strength, O Zion! Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for the uncircumcised and the unclean shall enter you no more. Shake yourself from the dust; rise up, O captive Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter Zion! For thus says the Lord: You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices; together they shout for joy, for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth; shout together for joy, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.

SERMON

Feet?!?

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

It Is Good to Give Thanks

Dan Forrest

*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

Now Thank We All Our God

arr. K. Lee Scott

**Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices,
Who, from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
And keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God our Maker now be given,
To Christ, and Spirit, too, our help in highest heaven,
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore.
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.**

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Now Thank We All Our God

Bach /arr. Virgil Fox

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ November 24, 2024

If you had a candle lit for a saint on **All Saints Day 2024**, the candles and angels will be available today in the office. You can light the candle on your beloved's birthday, anniversaries, or to sense God's love.

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

There are still a few Salvation Army Christmas Angels Gift tags available for children and seniors. Let's have 100% participation so no one is left out. Tags will be available in Syster Hall after both services today. Hope to see you there. Remember gifts are due at the church by Sunday, December 8.

Stewardship Update: as of Tuesday, November 19 we had received **123 intentions of giving for \$354,666.** Thank you to everyone who has turned in your card. If you have not, please consider offering a financial gift for 2025. If you have questions, see Pastor Wes.

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 ~ **Angel Tree Gift Tags** ~ Tags are still available for in-person pickup after the 9 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. **Toy Drive for Alta Vista School** ~ Let's Be a Good Neighbor ~ Items needed include board games, books, Legos or dolls ~ full list in the narthex. **First UCC Women ~ Christmas Bag program** ~ we offer gifts of personal hygiene and stationery to Orchard Place residence and through Meals on Wheels. A full list can be found in the narthex. **All items should be NEW!! 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.

The Acting Our Age ~ Voices of the Harbor has been rescheduled!! This features **Lynne Woodman, Winnie Downes, and Carl Denney** from our church. **The new dates** are Sat. Nov. 23, 7pm and Sun. Nov. 24, 2pm. **Location** Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center/Holley Hall 709 N Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL. Tickets available: <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/AOA2024>

CALLING ALL BUCKET FILLERS ~ JOIN A TEAM IN 2025 ~Yes, YOU! We are blessed with so many opportunities to serve. There is joy in doing what we can to make a difference. There is kindness in helping set the table for those in need. There is gratefulness in discovering we can be a team member even if we have limited mobility. We are all called to do

what we can where we can. Having a full bucket or cup is a precious gift, one to be shared generously. **Won't you join us? What You Can Do:** Go to: uccsarasota.com; Select: About Us (at the top) and "Organization" from the dropdown menu; Scroll to: "Discover our Church's Organizational Structure ~ Check out the committees, groups and teams to learn more and open the "Statement on Structure" for specific tasks and meeting information Contact a member of the Nominating Committee for more information: Carol McCloud, Harold Mezile, Nancy Morris

Come one, come all to the annual Women's Association's Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, **December 3**, at 11:30 am. We will fill Christmas bags for shut-in seniors (male and female) in our community. **Our goal this year is to fill 100 bags** that will be distributed to the residents of Orchard Place and to Meals on Wheels. Cost for lunch is \$15.00. **All are welcome.** Please sign up after Sunday worship or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

Drumming as a Spiritual Practice meets the first and third Tuesday in the **Chapel**. Our next meeting is on **Tues 12/3 at 3:00pm**. **New drummers are welcome;** drums are provided.

Sacred Conversations on Race continues on **December 10 at 3 p.m.** ~ we will be discussing resources from Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative.

Brady Sarasota's 8th annual Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence will be held in our sanctuary on Friday, Dec. 6, at 6 pm. The featured speakers this year will be Parkland parents **Manny and Patricia Oliver**, whose son Joaquin was murdered on Valentine's Day 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. More than 45,000 people died in gunfire last year. Since the election, some have asked Brady why keep fighting? Our response: If we can change one mind, pass one good law or save one life, our work will be worth it.

The Prayer Circle invites you to attend **two activities** that will ease your journey to Bethlehem where we meet our savior Jesus the Christ. Are you feeling anxious about the state of our world? Would you welcome an opportunity to renew your spirit in the Advent Season? Bring whatever you are carrying in your heart and join our congregation as we prayerfully walk the labyrinth on **December 8 after the 11 a.m. service led by Lindsey Huddleston**. Dress for the weather and wear walking shoes. We will write the names of those you wish to especially remember around the labyrinth. Please provide your names to Sherry by Thursday, December 5th. Second, **Singing our Prayers for Advent Wednesday, December 11th @ 4 p.m.** We will continue to keep the spirit of Advent through our second Singing our Prayers session led by Greg Chestnut. Greg will be selecting hymns that especially resonate with us during this time. Please invite your friends and neighbors to this very special gathering.

Artful Prayer ~ December 12th @ 2 p.m. (Hybrid ~ Zoom or Oasis Center) What does it mean to be "Theotokos" or Godbearer? By Rev. Donna Papenhausen You will need drawing paper, colored pencils, crayons or markers. See Pastor Wes for Zoom link

A Celtic Christmas, December 13th & 14th at First Presbyterian Church. The popular event features a 60-voice choir combining the First Presbyterian Choir and the Via Nova Chorale, along with the acclaimed Lubben Brothers Band, bagpiper Kevin Weigand, and Irish dancer Suzanne Ceasar. Tickets are \$25 in advance, and \$35 at the door, if available. Sponsorships are available for anyone needing help with admission at 941- 955-8119.

COLLAGE Christmas Party for our LGBTQIA+ and Allies will be on December 14 at 6 p.m. at Sandi Armstrong's home (2616 Hawthorn St.) Please RSVP by 12/11/24 to sjarmstrong@comcast.net and not if you will bring appetizers, side dish or dessert. Ham will be provided. We will have the traditional White Elephant exchange of present (\$15 or less) with Dale Moore and Steve Horowitz helping us out. **All are welcome!!**

Christmas Lights tour ~ join Len and Drue Murray on a festive night of seeing the beautiful lights in our community. You meet at the church at 5:30 and return around 8 p.m. The dates of the tour are **Dec. 17 and Dec. 19** ~ sign up in the narthex ~ space is limited.

Christmas Cookie Extravaganza ~ Fellowship on December 15th Hosted by UCC Women Celebrate the Christmas season during Fellowship Coffee Hour in December hosted by UCC Women. On Sunday, December 15th, after the 11 a.m. worship service we'll have another **COOKIE EXTRAVAGANZA!** Bake a batch of your favorite Christmas cookies and bring them to share (along with a recipe, if you wish) with the congregation. "Tis the season" – see you there!

THIS WEEK

Sunday, November 24 ~ Thanksgiving Sunday with Brass and Percussion

9 a.m. ~ Early Service, Sanctuary ~ featuring choir with brass and percussion
11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online ~ featuring choir with brass and percussion
Noon ~ Fellowship Time ~ featuring pumpkin pie

Monday, November 25

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

Tuesday, November 26

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

Wednesday, November 27

Bible Study, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, November 28 ~ Church Campus Closed ~ Happy Thanksgiving!!

Sunday, December 1 ~ First Sunday of Advent and Holy Communion

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