



January 2024



First Congregational UCC

May the unconditional and unceasing love of God enfold and hold you. May the peace of Christ which surpasses our understanding wrap you in the mystery and marvel of this moment. May the strength of the Spirit swirl and sing to your life every day in 2024!



As we hang up our calendars for the New Year, there are so many meaningful events and experiences that are on the horizon at our church.

- **2024 is our church's 70th Anniversary.** Insert confetti being thrown here!! On Valentine's Day of 1954, our church held its first worship service. We will be celebrating our 70th Anniversary all year long.

- **2024 is also Greg Chestnut's 35th Anniversary of being our amazing Music Minister.**



Greg inspires us every Sunday. Stop and consider, Greg has played over 1800 preludes and as many postludes. He has conducted the choir to sing over 2000 anthems. Greg shines his light and shares his love in ways too numerous to mention.

For Greg's warmth, care, compassion, musical ability, thoughtfulness, and faithfulness, *we have been blessed.* We will honor Greg's music ministry throughout the year!

Office Hours

Pastor Wes:

Mon. - Thurs.: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sherry Glover:

Mon. - Tues.: 10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Wed. – Thurs.: 10:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Mark:

Mon. - Fri.: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Greg:

Tues. - Sat.: Various Hours



Worship ~ 8:45 a.m. in the Chapel

Worship ~ 11:00 a.m. in person in the Sanctuary and livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook.

- **2024 is the 30th anniversary of our Jaeckel Organ** in the sanctuary. Our Music and Fine Art's Team is contracting with an organist to offer a performance in 2024. What a wonderful blessing the organ is to our worship and singing praise to God each Sunday.
- **2024 will also be my 10th Anniversary as your pastor.** This is an incredible privilege to be part of a fun-loving and faithful, inclusive, justice-seeking, servant-heart people of God at such a time as this. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!
- **2024 will be a year of celebrations.** We will begin the year with a conversation about our Core Values. During 2023, your moderator team (Nancy Morris, Harold Mezile, and Jim Butterworth), led a conversation on our Core Values which were more than a decade old. **Our new Core Values are: Welcome, Worship, Caring, Belonging, Justice, and Faithfulness.** After worship on **January 7th in Syster Hall**, as you are enjoying birthday cake, Jim Butterworth and I will lead a conversation on these Core Values. We encourage you to attend.

On **Monday, January 8th**, I will kick off *the Wayless Way Book Club* at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center. Please see **Page 4** for more information and sign up with me today.



On **Friday, January 12th**, in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, we warmly welcome **Dr. Keith Hampton** to our church for a concert at **7 p.m.** in the sanctuary. On Saturday, Dr. Hampton will work with our choir. On Sunday, **January 14th at both the 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. services**, Dr. Hampton will help lead our prayer and praise of God! This is an amazing opportunity to welcome back Dr. Hampton who will bless us.

After **January 14th** worship, COLLAGE will offer a conversation about **ALSO Youth** and reaching out to young adults in our community.



On **January 21st**, SURE (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity) will host a Network Meeting for our church. This gathering in Syster Hall will provide updates since our October House Meeting on the work that is occurring in Affordable Housing, Restorative Justice in the Schools, and Criminal Justice in our State. Please plan to attend as we look toward the **Nehemiah Action on March 18th at 6:30 p.m.** at our church!

On **January 28th at noon in our sanctuary we will host our Annual Meeting.** We will celebrate the work of this past year: our Sanctuary remodeling project, Sacred Conversations on Race, Bible Study, Artful Prayer, Drumming, Choir, worship, new members, and a vital/vibrant Spirit that guides our church. We will approve our new leadership for 2024 as well as our budget.



BUT WAIT...THAT IS NOT ALL. On February 11th, our very own **Priscilla Crumel** will bring to life the story of **Mary McLeod Bethune** at our 11 a.m. worship.

On February 14th, 70 years after the very first worship gathering of our church, we will observe **Ash Wednesday** and begin the season of Lent.



On February 18th, we are planning a **church picnic** at **noon** in Syster Hall.

Each **Thursday in Lent**, all will gather to share stories of faith from **10:30 a.m. to noon**. The Spiritual says it well, “We’ve come this far by faith...” This Lent we will give voice to how God’s presence has left an impression on each of our hearts. Thank you for the privilege of serving alongside you every day.

With God’s love ~ Wes

WORSHIP

8:45 in the Chapel and 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary
(Livestreamed every Sunday at 11 a.m.)

January 7th ~ We begin the New Year by celebrating communion together. Pastor Wes will preach on Luke 3 ~ the prophetic words of John the Baptizer. Begin 2024 by centering your heart, soul, and life in God’s presence.

January 14th ~ We are delighted to welcome Dr. Keith Hampton at both services!! Pastor Wes will preach on the baptism of Jesus as an invitation for faithfulness ~ growing in the image of God for the sake of the other. Bring a friend, this will be an amazing Sunday.

January 21st ~ Pastor Wes will preach on the wilderness moments of life, Luke 4 and how faith does not equate to life of chocolate rivers and pony rides. As Jesus faced temptations, so do we.

January 28th ~ Annual Meeting Sunday ~ We celebrate 70 years of faithfulness that continues to grow! Pastor Wes will preach on the call to discipleship, Luke 5.

Annual Meeting ~ January 28th

The Annual Meeting for First Congregational UCC will be held on January 28th immediately following the worship service in the sanctuary. The meeting will be livestreamed on **YouTube and Facebook**. Please stay on-line after the postlude and we will begin the Annual Meeting as soon as possible. If you are not able to attend in person, **you can vote early by picking up a paper ballot in the office.** This year at our annual meeting we will vote on:

Financial Reports 2023 ~ Budget 2024 ~ Nominating Report 2024

Celebrate all the ways we have shared God’s love this year!! The Annual Report will be available on the website on **January 14th**. Financials will be available either in church or via email from the church office. If you desire a paper copy, please contact the office. Questions? See Moderator Nancy Morris.

Dr. Keith Hampton
Composer, Organist, and Conductor
Artist in Residence January 12th - 14th, 2024

We are privileged to host Dr. Keith Hampton from Chicago, on Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

Friday evening, January 12th, at 7:00: Dr. Hampton will present a FREE concert in our sanctuary. Dr. Hampton will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of our Jaeckel Pipe Organ by playing several concert works. He will also engage the audience in singing spirituals and music in the gospel genre. You will not want to miss this evening filled with a variety of soul- stirring music by this incredible artist!

Saturday, January 13th, from 10:00 - 2:30: Dr. Hampton will rehearse with our amazing choir as we prepare to sing some of his favorite choral works. The day will focus on authentic style and interpretation of the African American choral traditions.

Sunday, January 14th: Dr. Hampton will help to lead our worship services with Pastor Wes and our own choir as we honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



*Keith "Doc" Hampton is the Artistic Director/Founder of one of Chicago's largest and most diverse choral organizations, **The Chicago Community Chorus**. Additionally, he is an organist, conductor, composer, educator, church musician, adjudicator, and clinician. He is the Cantor to the Seminary Community at the **Lutheran School of Theology** at Chicago. He is Director of Music and Organist at **Saint Thomas Episcopal Church** and Assistant Director of Music at **Trinity United Church of Christ** in Chicago.*

Join the
Zoom Conversations



COLLAGE 2nd & 4th Tuesdays @ 11 a.m. ~ COLLAGE is our LGBTQIA+ and Ally Group. All are welcome to join our COLLAGE group on Zoom for support and faithful discussion.

Tuesday Bible Study @ 6:30 p.m. ~ We meet on Zoom to discuss the upcoming Sunday Bible passage.

Wednesday Bible Study @ 11 a.m. ~ **HYBRID** in the Oasis Center to discuss the upcoming Sunday Bible passage.

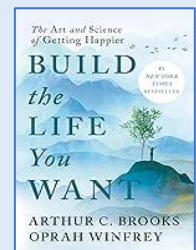
SCOR (Sacred Conversations on Race) 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @ 3 p.m. ~ **HYBRID** in the Oasis Center.

Zoom links available through Pastor Wes

The Wayless Way ~ Your Life as a Curriculum (Hybrid Oasis Center/Zoom)

As we begin a New Year, we will launch twice monthly conversations centering around a book with Pastor Wes weaving insights from scripture and inspiration. You do not need to attend all the sessions, but there will be a thread that will run from session to session.

- **January 8th & 29th:** *Build the Life You Want* by Arthur C. Brooks & Oprah Winfrey
- **February 12th & 26th:** *Hope Leans Forward* by Valerie Brown
- **March 11th & 25th:** *The Return of the Prodigal Son* by Henri Nouwen
- **April 8th & 22nd:** *No Cure for Being Human* by Kate Bowler
- **May 13th:** *The Seventh Story* by Brian McLaren



On each of the Mondays listed above, we will gather at **4 p.m. and finish by 5:15 p.m.** For more information, specific reading plan, and to register for the conversation, **please contact Pastor Wes**. Please know we do not want buying five books to be a barrier or burden. We will have a few to loan out and scholarships are available. I hope you will sign up with me.

Meet Our New Members



Kyle & Donna Booth



Kyle, formerly of Kentucky, has lived in Sarasota since 1958. He attended the University of South Florida and worked as a news editor at the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. He currently is a board member and volunteer at Pines of Sarasota in their nursing and rehab center.

Donna moved with her parents to Sarasota in 1980 from Norridge, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago). She attended Evangelical School of Nursing receiving her BA at Elmhurst College in nursing/theology. For 27 years, Donna worked as an RN. For 25 years she was a children's ministry director. You may recognize Donna in our choir—she loves to sing. She is also a former volunteer at Pines Preschool.

Joan Faucher



Joan moved back to Sarasota from New York state. Her early years were spent in Sarasota where she graduated from Sarasota High School.

She received her BS from Troy State University and her MS from Hofstra University in New York. She also graduated from the Florida Highway Patrol Academy. Joan was a physical education/health education teacher for 16 years at East Rockaway High School in New York before retiring. While in New York, Joan taught CPR and began her First Responder training. Joan's second career found her spending 18 years as a Florida State Trooper where she also offered First Responder training to the Florida Highway Patrol.

Valerie Fields



Valerie grew up in Safety Harbor, FL. She moved to Sarasota in 1984 from Clearwater. Though retired, Valerie spent 47 years in the cosmetology field as a salon owner and hairdresser.

She attended Dunedin High School in Florida and John Tomlinson in St. Petersburg to obtain her state cosmetology license. Valerie has three grown sons who live nearby in Venice and Sarasota. She also has a grandson that she adores and who brings her much joy.

Valerie assists our guests on our church bus to and from Plymouth Harbor on the days Joan Faucher is the driver. Teamwork at its best!

Michael Fraschetta



Michael grew up in Norristown, PA. He moved to Sarasota from Philadelphia in 1996.

He graduated from Villanova University and began his life's work as a social worker. He worked largely in addiction treatment centers. In the 80's he was very involved in creating and providing HIV prevention programs. Michael's favorite job was providing activities for older adults in assisted living and nursing facilities.

Michael loves to sing and is a musical theatre lover and actor. He was the musical director at a Catholic high school for several years and loved the students. Among his own roles in community and dinner theaters were *Curly* in *Oklahoma*, *Lancelot* in *Camelot*, and *Tony* in *West Side Story*, to name a few.

Gary Pike



Gary moved to Sarasota in 1985 from the central Illinois town of Morton, known as Pumpkin Capital of the World.

Gary worked for Ethan Allen for 10 years as an interior designer and project manager before starting his own design firm, Point West Designs, in Sarasota in 1995. He specialized in large-scale residential renovations primarily on Longboat Key. In 2003, he began importing antiques from Germany and Austria and developed Orange Dolphin Galleria on Orange Avenue in Burns Court.

He loves to travel—Finland, Italy, France, Greece with greater amounts of time in Germany and Manhattan. Gary also enjoys the theatre, opera, and dining. He likes to cook anything Ina Garten recommends and has started painting again after a 40-year hiatus.

Jerry Travis



Jerry grew up in Hornell, NY before moving to Buffalo in 1963. In 1973 Jerry moved to Harbor City, CA and has lived in Sarasota since 2017.

He graduated from Bryant Stratton Business Institute in Buffalo, NY where he studied Business Administration with a major in accounting. For forty years Jerry worked in payroll management, with an additional fourteen years as corporate controller and secretary/treasurer.

Jerry has one son who completed 20 years in the Army. He is currently working at the Department of Veterans Affairs for Bay Pines Hospital in St. Pete.

Norm & Ginny Wilcox



Norm and Ginny grew up in Kenmore, a suburb of Buffalo, NY. Their days were forever changed when Norm, a basketball player, and Ginny, a cheerleader, rode the bus to an away game—you need to hear the story from them.

For 27 years Norm and Ginny have spent their winters in Sarasota where Ginny loves playing bridge and Norm loves to golf. They summer in Hillsdale, MI to be near family and the memories they created in their 20 years as owners/operators of their campground.

After their graduation from Bryant Stratton Business Institute, Ginny had a career in public relations at the local hospital. Norm spent most of his career as traffic manager for Doehler-Jarvis Tool & Die. After several transfers, it was the one that would take them just outside New York City that helped make the decision to leave the company and begin working as traffic manager of a food chain keeping them close to home.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES ~ LOVE in ACTION

Food Collection for All Faiths Food Bank ~ January 7th



In just three months, we have collected **920 lbs.** of food. The **first Sunday of each month** is the collection of non-perishable foods for the food bank.

Any items in jars and/or cans along with items that have a long shelf life like pasta, pudding, Jello etc., are appreciated. The old standby items of peanut butter, jelly and spaghetti sauce are also needed.

The rule of thumb for donating is, "If you would enjoy having it, they would appreciate having it." Please be sure everything has an expiration date of mid 2024 or later.

There will be a basket in the narthex labeled **ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK**. Please place your items in the basket or next to it if the basket is full.

Thank you for your generosity in these times of increased food insecurity.
Your Food & Hunger Group



Bread for the World Offering of Letters

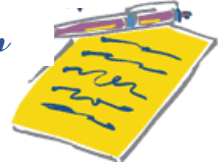
Our annual Offering of Letters will address the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill covers everything from nutrition (80%, of which SNAP is the largest component) to other farm and food programs (20%). The bill was set for passage in 2023 and received an extension in November.

We will write letters to Congress in March 2024 to encourage speedy passage of this landmark legislation.

The goal is to have the Farm Bill passed in spring 2024.
Your Food & Hunger Group

Letters

From you



*“A prayer shawl is like being wrapped in love!”
~ Brenda Robinson*

Prayer Shawl Ministry ~ January 26th

Calling all knitters and crocheters! The next gathering of the Prayer Shawl Ministry Group will be on **Friday, January 26th from 2 – 3:30 p.m. at Lindsey Huddleston’s home.**

Contact Lindsey for address and directions
romamor@aol.com) or (630-338-9294)

Refreshments will be served.

Community Meal ~ January 23rd

The monthly community meal that we continue to provide at St. Paul Lutheran Church feeds those who are hungry and in need of fellowship. Our guests are treated to a Sandy Smith home cooked meal. The home-baked items provided by our church family add a sweet treat that is heartily enjoyed.



Our mission is to feed the hungry and offer fellowship to our guests.



Please volunteer with on-site set-up/serving/clean-up functions at St. Paul’s Fellowship Hall. We will be providing a favorite—**strawberry shortcake**. Please contact Carol Hagglund for details.

Please join us on **January 23rd from 4-6:30 p.m.** Thank you for all you do for those in need.

Volunteer and/or inquire for more details: Carol Hagglund at carol.hagglund@gmail.com.

SURE ~ Save the Dates



Rally: Tuesday, February 27 ~ 6 p.m. ~ Bethlehem Bible Church (1680 18th St.)
Nehemiah Action: Monday, March 18th ~ 6:30 p.m. ~ First Congregational UCC
Celebration & 25th Anniversary: April 8th ~ First Presbyterian

Embracing Our Differences



We recently supported Embracing Our Differences which is helping to build a culture of belonging within our schools and community. In their acknowledgement of our gift, we offer these words from Sarah Wertheimer, Executive Director:

"Treating others with empathy, kindness and integrity leads to trust and respect. These values are key to transforming our society. Because of your generosity, we can support local students and educators with books, lesson plans, workshops, and curriculum that uphold these principles."

Brady News



Brady Sarasota would like to thank First Congregational for hosting yet another December vigil for the victims of gun violence, and the many members of the church who attended. This annual event is a special way of remembering and reflecting on the victims and survivors. Our musicians, speakers and planners somehow make every year more meaningful than the last.



Lynne Woodman

Will the open carry of weapons be allowed this year in Florida? We'll see. Brady is fortunate to have State Rep. Michele Rayner of Pinellas and Hillsborough counties coming to our meeting on January 4th to talk about that possibility and about the many gun bills—both good and bad—that are planned for the 2024 legislative session, which begins the following week. The meeting will be held in the Oasis Center starting at 4 p.m. It should last about an hour, and all are invited to attend.

Brady's Bayfront rallies will resume January 11th at the south end of the parking lot, in front of Bayfront Park and O'Leary's, from 4 to 5 p.m. They will continue every Thursday into April. Come out to raise awareness about the need to end the public health crisis created by weak gun laws in this country.



Erica Dorsey's son Aaron was shot while riding his bike. She now asks parents not only if they will be home when her son visits, but if their guns are safely locked away.

2023 Eco Summit in Review *by Cheryl Beller*



Green Team members recently showed up for the environment by attending the 2023 Eco Summit, held December 5th – 6th at the Van Wezel Hall in Sarasota and sponsored by the Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida. We were already aware that waste, pollution of our water and natural lands, uncontrolled growth and fast increasing climate change were threatening our quality of life. Over those two days, a lively solutions-oriented experience unfolded, with lectures, panel discussions, storytelling, and music. Our eyes were opened, hope was instilled, and we learned of ways we could personally help the cause.

The Eco Summit was unlike anything we had ever seen. Our eyes were opened by dozens of experts and storytellers who explored insights and innovations for recharging our environment and reducing our impacts on it. The summit's scope was vast. The first day was about growth and balance. Our population is expanding rapidly, and we cannot change that, but we can implement strategies for sustainable land development practices that grow environmental infrastructure and resiliency. Projects, such as those in our own Bayfront and Marie Selby Gardens, are cleaning water and protecting against flooding. Environmental groups and conservation managers have been acquiring lands, which help to protect wildlands and wildlife. That evening we were treated to comic lightening in the form of "Florida Stories" by savagely funny author and storyteller Carl Hiassen.

The second day, plans were discussed to restore Florida's estuaries. Actual cases that are supporting recovery and resilience are underway. We met some of the heroes (many of them volunteers) who work to protect wildlife. Sea turtle nests are increasing and surviving. We were delighted to learn that Sarasota Bay has a large family of dolphins. They have names and are recognized by the marks on and the shapes of their dorsal fins. The day ended with the focus on our homes and personal pollution.

We learned about recycling and where to donate our unwanted household goods. First Congregational Church sponsors a composting program on own campus. The Green Team's chairperson, Sarah Melcher, initiated this service. Please contact her to learn how you can easily have your family's food waste composted into healthy nutrients for the soil by joining up and adding to our critter-safe and odor-free composting bin!



*Alexis, Age 15
Trinity UCC, St. Louis, MO*

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT NEWS

COLLAGE News

- **Transgender Day of Remembrance** was recognized on **November 26th** both during the worship service and in the Memorial Garden afterwards. A letter, signed by congregants, was sent to the FL Governor expressing support of Transgender medical care.

- On **November 30th**, COLLAGE sponsored a **Field Trip to ALSO Youth** to learn about their Ambassador Program. Michael Keane, COLLAGE Ally, serves on the Board of Directors of ALSO Youth and arranged for our visit. ALSO Youth Staff explained their work with LGBTQIA+ Youth. A moving testimony was presented by a mother of one of the Youth who receives life enhancing support from the ALSO Youth Program. A tour of their facility was provided, and attendees were invited to support the work of ALSO Youth Programs.



ALSO Youth
ADVOCACY~LEADERSHIP
SUPPORT~OUTREACH

- **January 14th Box Luncheon** with local youth to dialogue ideas on how to engage more youth in COLLAGE activities.

January COLLAGE Hybrid/Zoom Meetings: Zoom/in-person ~ Oasis Center

January 9th and January 23rd @ 11 a.m.

RACIAL JUSTICE COVENANT NEWS



Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR) ~ January 10th & 24th

SCOR meets the **second and fourth Wednesdays**
at 3 p.m. ~HYBRID~ in person at the Oasis Center or on Zoom.

~ January 10th ~

We will watch a sermon by General Minister of the UCC, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, given at the Florida Conference UCC Annual Meeting

~ January 24th ~

We will read and discuss Toni Morrison's "*Recitatif*." Please note, if you read the Morrison book, you need to skip the introduction, read the story first between two women—one black and one white—in which Morrison doesn't specify in the story the race of each woman. After you experience the story, you can read the introduction to Morrison's insights into race.

All are welcome! Please see Jim Crumel for more information.

IN OTHER NEWS . . .

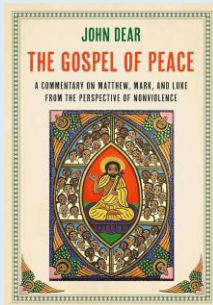
Artful Prayer ~ Thursday, January 11th 2 p.m. – Oasis Center or Zoom

January is often seen as a time of transforming from our past into the new year and new beginnings. Water is often also used as a metaphor for transformation and will be the focus of this January 11th session led by **Brenda Robinson**, whose art is featured here.

No art experience required. Supplies will be provided if you attend in person. Contact Pastor Wes if you need the Zoom link and watch weekly messages for the supply list in early January.



**An Evening with Father John Dear, on his new book: *The Gospel of Peace*
March 17th ~ Lakewood UCC, St. Petersburg, FL**



On the afternoon of Sunday, March 17th, peacemaker, author, and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Father John Dear, will be at Lakewood UCC (St. Pete) to talk about and sign copies of his new book: *The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence*. It is the first ever commentary on the Synoptic Gospels from the perspective of active nonviolence in the tradition of Gandhi and Dr. King. This original work explores every line of the three Synoptic Gospels pointing out Jesus' practice and teachings on nonviolence, peace, and universal love.

Lakewood UCC is located at 2601 54th Avenue S., St. Petersburg, FL.

Books are currently available at a discounted price of \$25, and a two-week study group may be led before the 17th, by church friend Bill Lewis. Please contact Barbara Smith-Bacon regarding book orders, or to sign up as a book study attendee.



**First UCC Women's Luncheon ~ January 2nd
11:30 in Syster Hall**

Established in 1925, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) is the longest-running and largest Ukrainian women's organization in the US. Our mission is to promote and develop educational and cultural efforts and provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians worldwide. We are guided by principles of Christian ethics, religious tolerance, political non-partisanship, and universal respect for human rights.

To ring in the New Year on **Tuesday, January 2nd**, 2024, the UCC Women's Association will host Bohdana Puzyk and Katia Shevchuk from the **Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA)**.

Come to Syster Hall at 11:30 a.m. and enjoy lunch (\$12), followed by the program. The ladies from Ukraine will display show-and-tell items including embroidery and handmade Ukrainian Easter Eggs. They will also tell us about the traditions of Ukrainian Christmas.



All are welcome. Please sign up to attend after Sunday worship or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

**~ January Fellowship ~
Fellowship & Special Events Team**



Thank you:

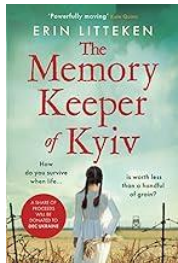
Mark Kukainis, Nancy McElroy, Nancy Morris, Barb Ralph, Buck Greenlaw, Connie Toops and Sandy Smith, chair



Marcia's December Birthday

Ready Readers ~ January 11th & February 8th

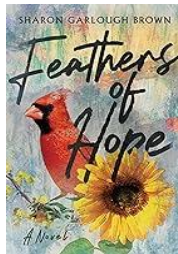
Thinking about joining a book club? We meet on the **second Thursday of every month at noon in the Oasis Center**. We welcome and encourage the participation and input of new members even if you are not able to attend every discussion. For more information, contact Sandy Smith at sandysmithvi@gmail.com or 340-227-5121.



January 11th

The Memory Keeper of Kyiv by Erin Litteken. In the 1930s, Stalin's activists marched through the Soviet Union, espousing the greatness of collective farming. It was the first step in creating a man-made famine that, in Ukraine, stole almost 4 million lives. Inspired by the history the world forgot, and the Russian government denies, Erin Litteken reimagines their story.

This is a story of the resilience of the human spirit, the love that see us through our darkest hours and the true horror of what happened during the Holodomor. May we never forget, lest history repeat itself.



February 8th

Feathers of Hope by Sharon Garlough Brown. "We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen." (2 Corinthians 4:18) In a season of loss and change, Wren Crawford and her great-aunt, Katherine Rhodes, share the journey as companions in sorrow and hope.

But the shedding of her old life is exhausting—especially as she doesn't yet see what new life will emerge. How might art continue to provide a pathway for deepening her awareness of God's presence with her?

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT . . .



January Birthdays

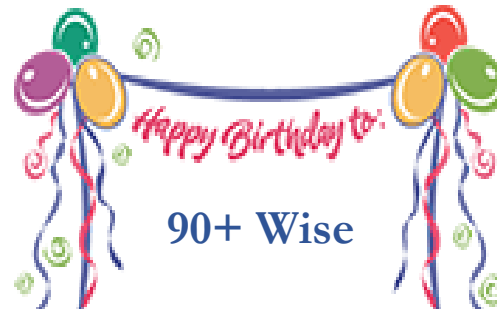


January Anniversaries



1/2	Clarence Rogers	1/15	Elizabeth Wildhack
1/4	Mo Sherrill	1/16	Karen Barber Naya Staib
1/5	Donald Vance Jennifer Walker	1/17	Carol Brickner Katie Kleppinger Cynthia Lichtenstein
1/6	Matt Jacobs Alma Niemiller	1/18	Lynn Kuhn
1/7	Judith Black Thela Leach	1/22	Drue Murray
1/9	Steve Combs Jane Delgado-Semidei	1/23	Betty Schattschneider
1/11	Gilbert Friend-Jones Kenneth Geiger Mildred Huisman	1/26	Michael Dousa Sara Dousa Jim Grub
1/12	Linda Campbell Ian Kavanagh John Ristow	1/27	Jeannie Mitchell
1/13	Donald Hoy Susan Moore Dorothy Reed	1/28	Linda Butler Christine Knupp
1/14	Ray Baker Sally Hohenthal Irving Woods	1/29	Donna Booth Dawn Swain
		1/31	John Bryant Fran Stubblefield David York

1/1	Dennis & Evelyn Crooks
1/2	Tom & Sue Fields Chris & Margo Light
1/6	Joseph & Joy Mayer Ted & Lindsay Prospect
1/22	Stephen & Kika Landers



~ Card Shower ~

1/5 ~ Donald Vance

1/6 ~ Alma Niemiller

1/11 ~ Mildred Huisman

1/17 ~ Cynthia Lichtenstein

1/23 ~ Betty Schattschneider



Wes Curry
Lovette Harper



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC CHURCH
 1031 Euclid Ave
 Sarasota, FL 34237
 www.uccsarasota.com



The 2024 Flower Chart is NOW ready for YOU! Do you have a special occasion coming up this year? Would you like to celebrate at an upcoming Sunday service?

Each Sunday, there is an opportunity for two bouquets. **The cost is \$40 per bouquet, payable to the church.**

Please sign up for a Sunday by emailing admin@uccsarasota.com
 We are grateful for the fresh flowers every Sunday that bring the beauty of God's creation into our worship space.

STAFF

Senior Minister Rev. Dr. Wes Bixby
 Minister of Music Gregory Chestnut
 Campus Manager Mark Swain
 Media Specialist Douglas Kingsley
 Bookkeeper Pam Ganshe-Boythe
 Financial Clerk Heidie Heath
 Office Administrator Sherry Glover

OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Moderator Nancy Morris
 Vice Moderator Harold Mezile
 Past Moderator Jim Butterworth
 Co-treasurers Robin Reich & Dale Woodling
 Pastor Emeritus Dr. John Syster
 Contributing Photographer Susan Moore
 Newsletter Carol McCloud, Evelyn Crooks

***We are an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ
 in the Florida Conference of the UCC.***

Telephone: (941) 953-7044; Fax: (941) 952-5245

Email: office@uccsarasota.com; Website: www.uccsarasota.com

We are worshipping on-line via Livestream each week at 11 a. m. and the service is posted to our website for streaming by 1 p.m. each Sunday afternoon.

