

February 11, 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: Gib and Jeannie Mithcell in loving memory of our daughter, **Karyn Humphreys** and Lisa MacBlane in memory of my mom, **Joanne Curry**

PRELUDE

Amazing Grace

arr. George Shearing

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: We celebrate the wisdom of African Americans to guide us into worship.

Many: **Susan Taylor who said, “Whatever we believe about ourselves and our ability comes true for us.”**

One: Dr. Mae Jemison said, “Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

Many: **Or the poet, prophet Maya Angelou who said, “the need for change bulldozed a road down the center of my mind.”**

One: And Ola Joseph said, “Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another’s uniqueness.”

Many: **We gather to worship today celebrating how God’s wisdom is woven into the tapestry of our lives.**

*OPENING HYMN

Walking in the Light

Walking in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Walking in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Trusting in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Trusting in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Singing in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Singing in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Dancing in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Dancing in the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Jesus is the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

Jesus is the light, beautiful light; ain’t it wonderful how the light shines.

*OPENING PRAYER

God of grace and God of glory, Your liberating love has been woven into the story of faith from the beginning. We remember how You infused and inspired Moses to sing, “Let My People Go” to Pharoah. We remember how You gave Ruth and Esther courage to shine their light in difficult times. We remember how Mary found fierce faithfulness to be the God-bearer amid the glares, stares, and whispers of others. You call us to do justice, show loving kindness, and walk humbly with You. We prayerfully commit our lives to sharing and shining a light of faith to the people who cross our path, the places we go, and in our sacred connection to Your creation. We especially covenant to share and shine our light with Your beloved who are pushed to the fringe and fray. Open our imaginations today to hear the story of Your beloved, Mary McLeod Bethune who didn’t hide her light but let it shine, let it shine, everywhere she went. For the wisdom of those from yesterday, today,

and tomorrow, we give thanks for all the ways You are still speaking and singing to our faith today. Amen.

*RESPONSE

I Am the Light of the World

“I am the light of the world! You people come and follow me!” If you follow and love you’ll learn the mystery of what you were meant to do and be.

ANTHEM

Keep Your Lamps

arr. Andre Thomas

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 8:16-18

¹⁶ “No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar or puts it under a bed; rather, one puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷ For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. ¹⁸ So pay attention to how you listen, for to those who have, more will be given, and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away.”

SERMON

Mary McLeod Bethune

Priscilla Crumel

PASTORAL PRAYER 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

Come and Taste

arr. Alice Parker

*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light, To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Spirit now we raise, Our joyful songs of thankful praise.**

*CLOSING HYMN

This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

**Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine. Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**All through the night, I'm gonna let it shine. All through the night, I'm gonna let it shine,
all through the night, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

**This joy, I have, the world didn't give to me. This joy, I have, the world didn't give to me.
This joy, I have, the world didn't give to me. No, the world didn't give it so the world
can't take it away.**

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Psalm XIX

Benedetto Marcello

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, February 11, 2024

You are invited after church today, First Congregational United Church of Christ's COLLAGE group invites you to a special event taking place at 12:30 pm in Syster Hall. We're excited to have **Gina Duncan**, nationally recognized speaker, and director from TransAction Florida, as our guest speaker. Gina's story as a transgender person with her advocacy for LGBTQ rights in Florida is inspiring. Her journey of overcoming adversity needs to be heard! This event includes not just a complementary light lunch, but much food for thought!

2023 Giving Statements have been emailed (1/23) and mailed (1/30). If you have not received yours, please let the church office know. Thank you for your continued generosity. You are a blessing!!

The Wayless Way ~ Your Life as a Curriculum ~ February book is *Hope Leans Forward* by Valerie Brown. We continue to lean in and listen to the wisdom of others in our Wayless Way Book Club. This month we hear from an African American Buddhist-Quaker on ways we can be in God's presence, especially amid the storms of life. This is a wonderful book that will nourish your soul. We meet on **Feb. 12 and 26 at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center or on Zoom**. The March book is the Return of the Prodigal Son by Henri Nouwen, a must read Christian classic on the parable from Luke 15. Sessions on Nouwen's book are March 11 and 25.

Wednesday, February 14 ~ Ash Wednesday ~ beginning of Lent. Two opportunities ~ at **noon**, we will offer a traditional Ash Wednesday service in the chapel. Pastor Wes will preach on Luke 9:12-22, *Who Do YOU Say Jesus Is?* Ashes will be available to anyone who wishes. At **5:30 p.m.**, we will offer a wonderful worship moment in Syster Hall, which is holy ground from our worship there this summer. We will enjoy a simple soup dinner. Then, around tables, we will begin the Lenten Theme of *Connecting Conversations*. There will be a few hymns mixed in and ashes available at the close of the service. Please note that the 5:30 p.m. is not the traditional experience, but will be worship, nevertheless.

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ gathers at 3 pm in the Oasis Center and on Zoom on the following date: February 14: Belonging, A Critical Piece of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - TED Talk by Carin Taylor. **February 28:** The Little Problem I Had Renting a House - TED Talk by James A White, Sr. All are welcome! You can join either in person in the Oasis Center or on Zoom. Please see Jim Crumel for more information.

NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON FEBRUARY 17th ~ The UCC Men's breakfast series continues on Saturday, February 17 and all the men of the congregation, new and longtime members, are invited to join for breakfast in Syster Hall then. Coffee will be on at 8 am and breakfast served at 8:30 am. **Doug Fields** will be manning the kitchen for breakfast and afterward **Mike Keane** will be introducing us to the Breath Prayer. You may register by

Thursday, February 15 by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

February 18 is the Kick Off of our 70th Anniversary at both services~

In 2024 we are celebrating the rich history of our **70th anniversary as a vibrant community church**. We are also celebrating **35 years of Greg Chestnut** as our minister of music sharing his passion and "Making a Joyful Noise!" Celebrations include Pastor Wes Bixby as our senior minister guiding us on this journey for 10 years "Giving Us His All"—*and then some!* We need your word describing what our church, Greg, and Wes mean to you—one or two words per slip. (*i.e. Spirit-filled, Inclusive, Loving . . .*) You will find three jars which will rotate between Syster Hall, the Narthex or outer office. Place your words for each in the appropriate jar. Multiple slips are encouraged—we know one word will never fully show our love! Whether you are attending in person or online, please consider providing your words describing your gratitude for this church, Greg, and Wes. ***Your responses by February 29th please!***

First Congregational UCC

Attn: Celebrate

1031 S. Euclid Avenue

Sarasota, FL 34247

We can't wait to share the results and celebrate our blessings!

Harold, Carol, and Nancy (*Your moderators*)

Also ~ Let's Celebrate, Celebrate! Join us after 11 am worship on February 18 for a special anniversary luncheon We will be celebrating three significant events in the life of our church! First, please join us, and second, if you can, please ***bring a side dish to share***. We will provide chicken (remember our delicious fall picnic), beverages, and, of course, a special cake. Looking forward to seeing you then.

During February, we welcome the return of **FEAST (Friends Eating And Studying Together)**. We will meet on Thursday mornings beginning **February 22** (as well as **February 29, March 7 and 14**) at **10:30 a.m.** for coffee, fruit, and goodies. This will be a holy time of conversations that connect us. Lent this year is a time to celebrate our relationships as a church, as well as welcome new folks to share parts of their life and faith. We live in a world where isolation is a problem, this gathering will offer the holy experience of sharing stories and getting to know each other better. Please plan to attend and bring 10 friends!

Racial Justice Mission Group and COLLAGE are co-sponsoring a viewing of *Rustin* right after worship service on **Sunday, February 25 in Syster Hall**. The movie tells the story of Bayard Rustin who orchestrated the 1963 March on Washington. He faced racism and homophobia as part of his participation in Civil Rights. Bayard Rustin famously proclaimed, "We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." The film stars Oscar best actor nominee, Colman Domingo. A light lunch will be served and discussion will follow the film.

The 2024 Altar flower chart is now available and waiting for you! If you have an anniversary, birthday, or special occasion in the coming months, please call and reserve a

Sunday today. Cost of bouquet is **\$40 each**. Thank you for bringing the beauty of creation into our worship on Sunday.

Join us at noon, Sunday, March 3, in Syster Hall, for our **Offering of Letters**. We will write letters to our Representatives to encourage them to support the Farm Bill. 1 in 3 people suffer from hunger and food insecurity. Also 1/3 of all food produced in the U.S. goes to waste. The Farm Bill addresses both issues.

CALENDAR

Sunday, February 11

Early Worship, 8:45 a.m., Chapel

Sunday Worship, 11 a.m., in Sanctuary and online ~ Priscilla Crumel Sharing!

COLLAGE luncheon, noon, Syster Hall

Monday, February 12

Wayless Way Book club, 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Tuesday, February 13

Endowment Meeting, 1 p.m., Oasis Center

Peace and Justice, 3 p.m., Oasis Center

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

Wednesday, February 14

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

Ash Wednesday Service, noon, Chapel

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

Ash Wednesday Soup and Service, 5:30 p.m., Syster Hall

Chancel Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, February 15

Finance Team, 3 p.m., Zoom

Saturday, February 17

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

Sunday, February 18 ~ Kick-off of the 70th Anniversary

Early Worship, 8:45 a.m., Chapel

Sunday Worship, 11 a.m., in Sanctuary and online

Celebration Potluck, noon, Syster Hall

90+ Wise Birthdays ~ February ~ Please help us shower with cards:

2/4 ~ Marilyn Brandt