

March 3, 2024 11:00 a.m.

# First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



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

[www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)

Flowers given by: George Francis, in celebration of **Rachel Taylor's birthday** and by anonymous, in celebration of **Pastor Wes' birthday**.

PRELUDE

*Adagio, from Symphony V*

C.M. Widor

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: Every day is filled with decisions,

**Many: From the meals we eat to the words we speak. From the choices we make and which roads to take.**

One: And in the world where the cereal aisle keeps expanding, we can be caught in analysis paralysis.

**Many: We can go down Google search wormholes until we are overwhelmed by overthinking.**

One: Today, we center our attention and intention on God.

**Many: In this moment, we turn down the volume on the demands and decrees to listen for God's wisdom.**

One: It is good to be here today.

**Many: Alleluia and Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*

- 1). I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back.
- 2). The world behind me, the cross before me...
- 3). Though none go with me, still I will follow...

\*OPENING PRAYER

**Expanding, evolving God, so often we want to classify and categorize everyone and everything. We do this politically on almost every issue. We do this socially and morally. We do this religiously. We even do this with the type of soda we drink because you are either Team Pepsi or Coke-a-cola, there is no other choice! You challenge us, O God, to move beyond our binary, either/or thinking. As we enter the home of Martha and Mary, help us see *both* as Your beloved daughters. Help us see ourselves in *both*. Help us honor our Martha-ness in the ways we get caught in turning our to-do list into a ta-da list! Help us honor our Mary-ness that You rested on the seventh day as holy and call us to do the same. Help us see life as more than a bubble test we fill in with our #2 pencil to be graded by You. Our life can be beautifully complex *and* contradictory. Help us peel back the layers of this story to discover and discern how You are with us in the wayless way of life. Amen.**

\*RESPONSE

*O Savior, Let Me Walk with You*

#503

**O Savior, let me walk with you in earthly paths of service true;  
Tell me your secret, help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.**

**Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear winning word of love.  
Teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.**

**Teach me your patience; let me be in closer, dearer company,  
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.**

**In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way,  
In peace that only you can give, with you, O Savior, let me live.**

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:38-42

<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, <sup>42</sup> but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

SERMON

*Beyond Either/Or Part 1*

OFFERING/ANTHEM

*Serve the Lord with Gladness*

Rollo Dilworth

DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God all creatures here below.**

**Praise God above you heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Repeat)**

**Alleluia, sing praises to the Lamb, Alleluia, Gloria!**

**Alleluia, we worship and adore; Alleluia to the Lord! (Repeat)**

CELEBRATION of COMMUNION

One: Come to the table to taste on the tip of your tongue the truth of who you are and whose you are.

Many: **We are the body of Christ, individually and collectively. We are the beloved children of God.**

One: Come to the feast where it is no longer about earning or deserving but receiving.

Many: **For here we encounter a grace unconditionally given and love unceasingly poured out.**

One: Come for all are welcome here.

Many: **We bring our beautifully befuddled selves, linking arms and connecting hearts to each other.**

ANTHEM

*Day by Day*

Martin How

*The Ushers will guide you forward via the center aisle to receive cup with a grape and piece of bread. Please return to your seat via the side aisles. The gluten-free bread is on the right, by the lectern. We will serve you in the seat if that is easier. **Please HOLD the elements until all have been served.***

PASTORAL PRAYER and LORD'S PRAYER (SUNG)

**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.**

PARTAKING the BREAD and GRAPE

PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

\*CLOSING HYMN

*O Jesus, I Have Promised*

#493

**O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; remain forever near me, my Savior and my Friend: I shall not fear life's struggles if you are by my side, nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.**

**O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self will! O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control! O speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul!**

**O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you that where you are in glory your servant shall be, too; And, Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; O give me grace to follow my Savior and my Friend.**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Fantasia in C*

J.S. Bach

### ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, March 3

As we are fed at Christ's table this morning, so we offer our non-perishable foods for All Faith's Food Bank. There is a basket in the narthex labeled **ALL FAITH'S FOOD BANK**. **Also, join us in Syster Hall after worship for our Offering of Letters.** We will write letters to our Representatives to encourage them to support the Farm Bill. A handwritten letter is given significantly more weight by our Representatives, so we will be writing letters by hand, and we will deliver your letter to our Representatives.

**Want to know more about the church? Join us in the Oasis Center after worship today for a light luncheon and time to connect.** Come with your questions and meet others ~ there is no obligation to join. Should you decide you like what you hear, and this is the church for you, we will welcome you in membership on New Member Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**29 Annual Choir Festival conducted by Jane Hunder, Sunday, March 3rd at 4:00** at Pines Shores Presbyterian Church, 6135 Beechwood Ave. It is a **free** concert ~ a gift to our community.

Offering a new and very special way to pray, the First UCC Women's Association has invited author and teacher Sybil MacBeth to show us how to "Pray in Color." Join us on Tuesday, **March 5, 11:30 am in Syster Hall** for doodling with pens and markers on paper. We will learn a versatile and meditative prayer practice that includes praying for others and addressing the daily stresses of life and work. Luncheon costs \$12. Sybil MacBeth is the author of the series of books called, *Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God* Check out her website and blog at [prayingincolor.com](http://prayingincolor.com).

You are invited to **FEAST (Friends Eating And Studying Together)**. We will meet on Thursday mornings: **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. **ALL are welcome!!**

**On Friday, March 8 at 11:00 am in the Oasis Center, John Butler** (son of John & Linda Butler) will be sharing experiences and pictures from his recent Medical Mission trip to Uganda, Africa.

**NEXT UCC MEN'S BREAKFAST ON MARCH 9 ~ 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. Steve Horowitz will present an informative program about "The Mysteries of Ancient Egypt" and chef Dale Moore promises us an Egyptian (!) breakfast. You may register by Thursday, March 7 by calling the church office at 941-953-7044. We hope to see you there!

**Next Sunday, March 10 ~ Please remember to spring forward ~ set YOUR clocks ahead when you go to sleep on Saturday night.**

**COLLAGE HOSTING LUNCHEON** For Embracing Our Differences. **MARCH 10, 2024** Immediately following the 11 o'clock service. *Embracing Our Differences* is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of art and education to celebrate the diversity of humanity. Come learn more about this amazing organization and why our church is a proud sponsor. Our Guest Speaker will be **Ben Jewell-Plocher** (he, him), *Learning and Engagement Director From Embracing Our Differences*. We hope you can join us. Sign-up sheets for lunch today.

**The Wayless Way ~ Your Life as a Curriculum ~** 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 at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center/Zoom.

**Artful Prayer ~ Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.** ~ Oasis Center or Zoom ~ will focus on creating **Small Sacred Spaces**. **Rev. Donna Papenhausen** will lead us in creating and blessing our own tabletop altar to use as a focus for personal prayer time. You will need to have a base (*placement, scarf, some other surface*.) You will assemble your own special elements from nature, photos, souvenirs, or other items that suggest people, place or situations you wish to hold in sacred space. Have ready paper and pen to create a blessing prayer. You may join in person or on Zoom.

**Sacred Conversations on Race ~ gathers at 3 pm in the Oasis Center and on Zoom on the following date: .March 13: How Racial Bias Works - and How to Disrupt it - TED Talk by**

Jennifer L. Eberhardt **March 27: *A Tale of Two Americas, and the Mini-Mart Where They Collided*** - TED Talk by Anand Giridharadas. All are welcome. Please see Jim Crumel for more information.

**Sanctuary Clean Up** ~ help us spruce up the sanctuary before Holy Week ~ **Saturday, March 16 at 8:30 a.m.** Thank you to **Rob Quarles** for coordinating. Many hands make light the work.

**SURE's Nehemiah Action ~ Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m. at First Congregational UCC** SURE is Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity. We are delighted to host the annual! We need to pack the Sanctuary for this event. Invite your neighbors ~ show up for justice on **affordable housing**. The following Sarasota business community and commissioners have been invited: William Russell, *CEO Sarasota Housing Authority*; Jon Thaxton, *Gulf Coast Community Foundation*; Scott Eller, *CASL*; Kevin Stiff, *CEO Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness*; Heather Kasten, *CEO Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*; Mike Moran, *County Commissioner*; Mark Smith, *County Commissioner*; Debbie Trice, *City Commissioner*. Free tickets available next Sunday!!

**“All Creatures Great & Small Pet Blessing” Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (*Rain or Shine*)** Bring your leashed or contained pets to be blessed by Pastor Wes on the lawn of our church. Cremains also blessed. Meet and learn more about local organization and ALSO Youth will be offering cold drinks and information. Have your picture taken with your pet. Please bring donations of dry cat and dog food for the Meals on Wheels Pet Love Program. Please contact Maggie Revere at [baypointgirls@comcast.net](mailto:baypointgirls@comcast.net) for details or how you can help! This is a church-wide, family-friendly event hosted by COLLAGE and the Green Team. **All are welcome!**

**Hunger Walk Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> (*before church*)** Team with us and walk to end summer hunger with All Faiths Food Bank. The Peace & Justice Team along with the The Food and Hunger Group are supporting this effort. Choose a one mile or 5k (about 3 miles) walk. The \$25 signup fee includes a t-shirt The walk starts at 8:15 a.m. at Nathan Benderson Park. Please notify Barbara Smith-Bacon or Ellen Marsey that you intend to walk.

## CALENDAR

### Sunday, March 3 ~ Celebration of Holy Communion both service

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

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

Bread for the World Offering of Letters during Birthday Sunday, noon, Syster Hall

New Member Class, Noon, Oasis Center

### Monday, March 4

Facilities & Grounds Meeting, 10 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Racial Justice Mission Group. 11 a.m., Zoom

**Tuesday, March 5**

UCC Women's Board Meeting, 10 a.m.  
UCC Women's Group Meeting, 11:30 a.m.  
Tuesday Bible Study, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

**Wednesday, March 6**

Wednesday Morning Bible Study, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom  
Worship Team, 1 p.m. Oasis Center and Zoom  
Chancel Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Thursday, March 7**

FEAST (Friends Eating And Studying Together), 10:30, Syster Hall  
Plymouth Harbor Circle Meeting, 2 p.m., MacNeil Chapel

**Friday, March 8**

John Butler sharing about Uganda, 11 a.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

**Sunday, March 10 ~ Honoring Lay Visitation Ministers**

Early Worship, 8:45 a.m., Chapel  
Sunday Worship, 11 a.m., in Sanctuary and online  
**COLLAGE Luncheon, after 11 a.m. worship, Syster Hall**

**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

*Phone: (941)953-7044 Our website: [www.uccsarasota.com](http://www.uccsarasota.com)*

*We are a **Creation Justice; Open & Affirming; and Racial Justice Congregation** of the United  
Church of Christ*