

March 10, 2024 11:00 a.m.

First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota



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

www.uccsarasota.com

March 10, 2024

11 a.m.

Flowers given by: Vonda Leonard, in honor of the **members, friends, volunteers** and **staff** of our church, Susan Moore in memory of my loving husband **Bill Moore**

PRELUDE

Aria on a Chaconne

Joel Martinson

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: The words of the hymn have fallen from our lips countless times,

Many: Bless be the tie that binds.

One: But sometimes our family connections can frustrate, flummox us; can claustrophobically confine us.

Many: Our hearts in Christian love.

One: And we struggle to love those with whom we share DNA.

Many: The fellowship of kindred hearts.

One: We live in a time where we feel distant and disconnected from each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Many: Is like to that above.

One: Come, Mothering-Father, to interrupt and disrupt our way with Your way this day.

*OPENING HYMN

God Made From One Blood

#427

God made from one blood all the families of earth, the circles of nurture that raise us from birth, Companions who join us to work through each stage of childhood and youth and adulthood and age.

We turn to you, God, with our thanks and our tears for all the families we've known through the years, The intimate networks on whom we depend of parents and partners and children and friends.

Through families we've tasted the value of trust and felt what it means to be loving and just, Yet families have also betrayed their best goals, mistreating their members and bruising their souls.

Help families in all their various forms to face with integrity struggles and storms; Grant peace to our homes that will nurture the bud of peace for the families You made from one blood.

*OPENING PRAYER

From Cain and Abel to Esau and Jacob to Rachel and Leah and Joseph sold off by his brothers, O God, scripture tells us of families who put the "fun" in dysfunction. Yet, such reality is in tension with the idealized images of family that we see on television and posted online. Just as we sought to move beyond the binary of either/or thinking last week with Martha and Mary, so too You invite us to see our story in the narrative of the prodigal family. Like the younger son, we've had moments of wanting to escape, explore, experience new places but have lost our way and ended up in the mud pit of life. Like the older son, we've had moments of muttering and mumbling to ourselves about others. God, Your lavish, prodigal, grace is too extravagant and over-to-top. Help us. Disrupt us.

Interrupt us. Let the gospel medicine be a balm to the woundedness and beautiful humanness of our lives. In the name of the One who told frustratingly profound and powerful parables that challenge and change us, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*RESPONSE

O God, How We Have Wandered
(verses 1 & 2 only)

#202

O God, how we have wandered and hidden from Your face; In foolishness have squandered Your legacy of grace, But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame, As distant but compelling, You call us each by name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do, By faith we are returning with hope and trust in You. In haste You come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring, In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 15:11-32

One: Then Jesus said,

Women: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father,”

Men: ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’

One: So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said,

Men: ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’

One: So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him,

Men: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

One: But the father said to his servants,

Women: ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’

One: And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. He replied,

Choir: ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.’

One: Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead

with him. But he answered his father,

Wes: 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'

One: Then the father said to him,

Women: 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'

SERMON

Beyond Binary, Part Two

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.

RECOGNITION of LAY VISTATION MINISTRY:

Dr. Sara Little, Rev. Dr. Craig Collemer, Julia Detloff, Hal Kamm, Dick Miller, Alleyne Kess, Sherry Mange, Maggie Revere, Janet Baker, Rev. Dr. David Pitt, Barbara Shaver.

ANTHEM

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

arr. Mack Wilberg

*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*)

*CLOSING HYMN

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

#459

Come, O Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unfailing love.

Here I pause in my sojourning, giving thanks for having come, come to trust, at every turning, God will guide me safely home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, Came to rescue me from danger, blessed body, precious blood.

**O to grace how great a debt or daily I am drawn anew! Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to you. Prone to wander, I can feel it, wander from the love I've
known: Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your very own.**

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Voluntary

Henry Purcell

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ SUNDAY, March 10

Today ~ COLLAGE HOSTING LUNCHEON For Embracing Our Differences 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. **Wait...there is more!!** The Racial Justice Mission Group invites you to a free docent-led tour of EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES at Bayfront Park on **Wednesday, April 3 from 1:30-2:30pm**. For those who do not want to drive, the church bus will load at 11:45am returning to the church by 3pm. Lunch options are O'Leary's Restaurant on site or taking your picnic lunch. Meet at the yellow arch entrance to the park at 1:20pm to begin the tour at 1:30pm.. **We need you to register by March 25** for the tour and (if desired) the bus by texting or calling Sheila Gossett at 614-769-4013. Or call Lindsey Huddleston (630-338-9294)

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.

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.

Last **FEAST** (**F**riends **E**ating **A**nd **S**tudying **T**ogether) will be **March 14 at 10:30 a.m.** for coffee, fruit, and goodies. We encourage you to bring an item that is meaningful/sacred/important to you to share with others. **ALL are welcome!!**

Artful Prayer ~ Thursday, March 14th 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.

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 18th @ 6:30 p.m. at First Congregational UCC

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 23rd, 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 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!**

POSTCARDS TO X-FELONS VOTING PROJECT - INVITATION FROM RACIAL JUSTICE MISSION GROUP and COLLAGE ~ In 2018 more than 64% of Florida citizens voted on an Amendment to have persons with felony convictions able to vote after serving their sentences. However, the Florida legislators added additional stipulations that made it virtually impossible for the Amendment to be enacted. In partnership with the League of Women Voter we will write postcards to ex-felons to help them get their voting rights restored. Please come to Syster Hall on **Sunday, March 24th at 12 noon** for refreshments and address some postcards. For more information, please text or call Gregg Mathews at 973-986-5184 (mobile) or 941-567-4808 (home).

Hunger Walk Sunday, March 24th (before church) Team with us and walk to end summer hunger with All Faiths Food Bank. The Peace & Justice Team along with 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 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

Monday, March 11

Wayless Way Bookclub, 4 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

Tuesday, March 12

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

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

Wednesday, March 13

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

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

Chancel Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, March 14

FEAST (Friends Eating And Studying Together), 10:30, Syster Hall
Artful Prayer, 2 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom
Finance Team, 3 p.m., Zoom

Saturday, March 16

Sanctuary Clean-up Day, 8:30 a.m., sanctuary

Sunday, March 17 ~ Endowment Sunday and New Members Joining!

Early Worship, 8:45 a.m., Chapel
Sunday Worship, 11 a.m., in Sanctuary and online
Fellowship following 11 a.m. worship

SUNDAY, APRIL 14th 7pm Evening Choral Artists presents a performance **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPERD**, in partnership with Embracing Our Differences and Project Pride. In the expansive landscape of the American West, a young student named Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten and left to die on a fence in Wyoming. In the aftermath of this heinous act, a national conversation regarding bullying and homophobia took center stage. What is so terrifying about 'the other' that creates such division and hatred? Craig Hella Johnson takes us on a musical journey that tells the story of Matt, a young man whose rather ordinary and typical life has left an extraordinary legacy for us to consider. Combining a variety of musical styles from country to gospel to chant and oratorio, the experience is powerful and moving for audiences. Location: Church of the Palms, 3224 Bee Ridge Rd. Advance discounted tickets at \$35 will be available for purchase in front of Syster Hall on Sunday, March 10th from Marilyn Lewis, and Carolyn Hadel. **Cash or checks to be made payable to Evening Choral Artists.** Duration is 105 minutes without intermission.

Upcoming Dates at-a-glance:

Nehemiah Action ~ Monday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

Manasota Racial Group ~ **Walk in My Shoes Event** ~ Thursday, March 21 at 5 p.m., Syster Hall

Pet Blessing ~ Front parking lot ~ Saturday, March 23 ~ 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Palm Sunday Service ~ Sunday, March 24 ~ 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. ~ in sanctuary

Postcard project to restore voting rights ~ Sunday, March 24, noon, after Worship

Maundy Thursday Service ~ Thursday, March 28, 6 p.m. ~ Syster Hall

Good Friday Service ~ Friday, March 29, noon ~ Sanctuary

Easter Sunday Celebration ~ Sunday, March 31 ~ 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. ~ Sanctuary

Celebration for Greg Chestnut ~ Sunday, April 14 at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.