

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

Palm Sunday



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

The beautiful plants for Holy week are provided by: **Tropex**, 3220 Whitfield Ave, Sarasota

CHOIR PRELUDE

Hosanna

Edward Leinbach

Please wave your palm branch every time we sing or say or hear the word, "Hosanna". The word, "Hosanna" means, "Save us". Waving our palms is an embodied prayer practice.

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: The word has echoed across the centuries and is woven into the woodwork and walls around us.

Many (*whisper*) **Hosanna.**

One: This one word that can evoke and provoke so much within us.

Many (*bit louder*) **Hosanna.**

One: One word that is *both* a hymn of praise welcoming Jesus **and** a heartfelt prayer for him to re-arrange our whole lives.

Many (*louder still*) **Hosanna!**

One: May this one word center us, ground, and guide us as we enter our holiest week.

Many: **Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna!!**

*OPENING HYMN

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

#213

"Hosanna, loud hosanna," the little children sang; through pillar court and temple the lovely anthem rang; To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast, the children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

"From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd, the victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud. The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state, and glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey's gait.

"Hosanna in the highest!" That ancient song is ours. We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers: "Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice. Hosanna! In your presence forever we'll rejoice!"

*OPENING PRAYER

God of words that transform us and are tattooed on our souls, we sing our prayer and praise to You. We join the Palm Sunday procession to follow You. We bring our gratitude for the ways Your amazing grace continues to evolve in us. We bring our fears that cut us off from each other. We bring our questions that amid a world where there is too much violence, what does it mean to worship a *suffering* savior? What difference does it make that You poured Your life into human form, came as a vulnerable infant, lived among us knowing laughter, love, friendship, singing hymns, feeling the sting of denial, dissertation, and death? Who are *You* God, and who are we? May these questions sit and simmer in our souls as we tell the holy narrative of this week. Help us find You in tactile and tangible ways of palms waving to bread broken to a cross to the mystery of an empty tomb. Open our whole lives to a story that we will never comprehend and at the same

time makes all the difference. In the name of the One we greet with anthems sweet as he rides on, rides on in majesty right into our hearts, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

ANTHEM

Hosanna To the Son of David

Daniel Moe

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:29-40

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ Now as he was approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

SERMON

A Holy Oddness

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.

OFFERING/ANTHEM

With A Thousand Alleluias

Joseph Martin

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

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

#216

All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring! The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way; our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.

O Promised One of Israel, of David's royal line, the one called "God's beloved," of flesh and yet divine, To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise; to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

As you received their praises, receive our prayers today, whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway. All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Heavens Are Telling Benedetto Marcello
Larry Herman & Paul Neebe, trumpet; Sandy Swanson, horn;
Jonathan Schubert, trombone

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ PALM SUNDAY, March 24

March 28 ~ Maundy Thursday ~ 6 p.m. in Syster Hall ~ We gather around tables, just as Jesus and the disciples did, to tell the story of God's presence in our lives. We begin with a **meal of Shepherd's Pie** and conversations that connect around the table at 6 p.m. At **6:30 p.m.** we will sing, celebrate communion, and ground ourselves in prayer.

March 29 ~ Good Friday ~ noon in the Sanctuary and online ~ We gather beneath the cross of Jesus to acknowledge our brokenness and woundedness ~ both individually and collectively. Our choir will sing during the service, and we will move from the Sanctuary out to the Memorial Garden of the Cross at the close of the service.

March 31 ~ Easter Sunday ~ Christ is Risen, Christ is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! Join our amazing choir at both **9 a.m. and 11 a.m.**, along with brass quartet and percussion from Sarasota Orchestra, as we share in the mystery and marvel of new life that pours forth from the empty tomb. We celebrate how God's light of love shines in our lives every day.

TODAY ~ POSTCARDS TO EX-FELONS VOTING PROJECT in Syster Hall – come for refreshments and stay to address some postcards.

The Racial Justice Mission Group invites you to a free, docent-led tour of the art billboards **EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES** in Bayfront Park on **Wednesday, April 3rd from 1:30 - 2:30**. Our church is a co-sponsor of Billboard #30. **The tour is free, but you must register by Monday, March 25th.** To register, call or text Sheila Gossett at 614-769-4013. For questions other than registration, text or call Lindsey Huddleston at 630-338-9294.

Please join the UCC Women for their monthly lunch and program on **Tuesday, April 2, at 11:30 am** in Fellowship Hall. We will hear from yoga instructor Michelle Winton, who will lead us in chair yoga before lunch. Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear. We ask each attendee to bring a child-size umbrella to benefit **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT, INC.** Children living in poverty are much more likely to stay home from school if it's raining because they don't have umbrellas. Luncheon costs \$12. Sign up after either Sunday service or call the church office at 941-953-7044. Questions? Call Lucy Hedrick, 203-561-9590, or lucy@lucyhedrick.com.

Handbells invitation ~ **beginning on Thursday, April 4 at 6 p.m. in the chapel**, you are invited to be part of our re-forming Handbell choir. We are looking for people of all levels ~ we especially welcome beginners who want to learn more. Please see Pastor Wes for more information.

Food and Hunger Group Shop Once and Help Both All Faiths Food Bank AND Second Chance Last Opportunity **On Sunday, April 7th** Lucy Hedrick will be in the parking lot with her trunk open for donations to Second Chance Last Opportunity include: Cases of water bottles, Hawaiian Punch, yellow rice, canned vegetables, canned beans, paper towels, toilet paper, toothbrushes, personal hygiene items, packages of meat and frozen vegetables. Collections for All Faiths Food Bank will be in the usual spot in the narthex. Remember for All Faith's Food Bank, the rule of thumb for donating is, "if you would enjoy having it, they would appreciate having it."

The Giving Challenge of 2024 sponsored by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, will be from **Noon Tuesday, April 9 to Noon Wednesday April 10th**. Many organizations the church supports will be participating. See the Midweek Message or April newsletter for more details on how to donate and how to get assistance in navigating the online process.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14th 7pm Evening Choral Artists presents a performance **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPERD**. After Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten and left to die on a fence in Wyoming, a national conversation regarding bullying and homophobia took center stage. Craig Hella Johnson takes us on a musical journey that tells the story of Matt, a young man whose ordinary has left an extraordinary legacy for us to consider. Combining a variety of musical styles from country to gospel to chant and, the experience is powerful and moving for audiences.

Location: Church of the Palms, 3224 Bee Ridge Rd. Advance discounted tickets at \$35 Cash or checks to be made payable to Choral Artists. Duration is 105 minutes without intermission.

Sacred Conversations on Race ~ gathers at 3 pm in the Oasis Center and on Zoom on the following date: March 27: *A Tale of Two Americas, and the Mini-Mart Where They Collided* - TED Talk by Anand Giridharadas. All are welcome.

The Wayless Way ~ Your Life as a Curriculum ~ The April book is, *No Cure for Being Human* by Kate Bowler. We will meet **April 8 and 22** at 4 p.m. in the Oasis Center/Zoom.

Looking Ahead – mark your calendars for **April 21, the date of our 2nd Annual Chili Cookoff!** We are recruiting Chili Chefs to offer your best batch chili on that Sunday, at 12:15 in Syster Hall. The congregation will vote on their favorite, and the winner will receive a **modest** prize and lots of praise! If you would like to participate, please contact Sandy Smith ~ sandysmithvi@gmail.com or 240-227-5121 (text or call).

THIS WEEK

Sunday, March 24 ~ Palm Sunday Worship

Early Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sanctuary

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

Postcard Project Sponsored by Racial Justice, Noon, Syster Hall

Monday, March 25

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

Tuesday, March 26

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

Wednesday, March 27

Sacred Conversations on Race, 3 p.m., Oasis and Zoom
Chancel Choir, 7 p.m., Chapel

Thursday, March 28

Maundy Thursday Service, 6 p.m., Syster Hall

Friday, March 29

Good Friday Service, 12 p.m./Noon, Sanctuary and Online

Sunday, March 31 ~ Easter Sunday Worship with Choir and Brass!

Early Worship, **9:00 a.m.**, Sanctuary
Sunday Worship, 11 a.m., in Sanctuary and online

Celebration for Greg Chestnut ~ Sunday, April 7 at 8:45 a.m. & 11 a.m.