

September 22 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: Sara Little and Barbara Shaver, in memory of Aletha and Jim Little

PRELUDE

*Andante Favori*

Beethoven

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: Whispered by mystics and sages throughout the ages, there is *one* word that grounds and guides our faith,

**Many: Praise!**

One: This one syllable word directs the destination where our soul longs to go.

**Many: Praise!**

One: And caught up in ways that are countercultural to cynicism, criticism, or that we *even* comprehend, we sing out for all to hear.

**Many: Praise, *praise, praise!***

\*OPENING HYMN

*Praise to the Living God*

#8

**Praise to the living God, the God of love and light,  
Whose word brought forth the myriad suns and set the worlds in flight;  
Whose infinite design, which we but dimly see,  
Pervades all nature, making all a cosmic unity.**

**Praise to the living God, from whom all things derive,  
Whose Spirit formed upon this sphere the first faint seeds of life;  
Who caused them to evolve, unwitting, toward God's goal,  
Till humankind stood on the earth, as living, thinking souls.**

**Praise to the living God, who knows our joy and pain,  
Who shares with us our common life, the sacred and profane.  
God toils wher-e'er we toil, in home and mart and mill;  
And deep within the human heart God leads us forward still.**

**Praise to the living God, around, within, above,  
Beyond the grasp of human mind, but whom we know as love.  
In these tumultuous days, so full of hope and strife,  
May we bear witness to the Way, O Source and Goal of life.**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**God we long to be lost in Your wonder, love, and praise; and yet often we feel just plain lost. We are exhausted trying to navigate the road when all our maps seem out of date and our compass keeps spinning in circles. We know Moses led Your people for forty long years through the wilderness, we know that Your people were in Exile for seventy years, but honestly God, we are not *that* patient. If Google doesn't have the answer in a millisecond, we are quick to get flummoxed and frustrated. Help us, O God, for we need another way. Honestly, we are unsure if we can truly live Your wisdom of letting go of**

**clinging to control that leaves fingernail marks in everything. God, interrupt, infuse, and inspire with Your presence every moment today and this week. Amen.**

\*RESPONSE

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (vs. 1 and 4)

#43

**Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,  
Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown;  
Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart.  
Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.**

**Finish, then, your new creation; pure and spotless may we prove;  
Let us see your great salvation perfectly restored in you;  
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

PAUSE to BREATHE and BE

READING

*The Peace of Wild Things*

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Luke 12, *selected verses*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will God clothe you? And do not keep seeking what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that seek all these things, and Yahweh knows that you need them. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

SERMON

*The Best Advice Never Taken*

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

*Christ Hath a Garden*

Near

\*DOXOLOGY/PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

\*CLOSING HYMN

*You Have Come down to the Lakeshore*

#173

**You have come down to the lakeshore seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy,  
But only asking for me to follow. O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling,  
you've called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I  
will seek other seas.**

**You know full well my possessions. Neither treasure nor weapons for conquest, Just these  
fishnets and will for working. O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling,  
you've called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I  
will seek other seas.**

**You need my hands, my exhaustion, working love for the rest of the weary – A love that  
willing to go on loving. O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you've  
called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I will  
seek other seas.**

**You who have fished other waters; you, the longing of souls that are yearning; As loving  
Friend, you have come to call me; O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling,  
you've called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I  
will seek other seas.**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Improvisation*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ September 22, 2024**

We are delighted to welcome **Stephen Fancher** as our guest choir conductor and organist.

**The Missions Team invites all of you to a special coffee hour TODAY after the 11 a.m. worship for a presentation from CenterPlace Health.** This vital service in our community has open doors for all folks in need without regard to race, creed, age, housing status, citizenship status, sexual orientation or ability to pay. CenterPlace Health has operated successfully for the past 6 years, managing to expand both their range of services and their service area. There are seven locations throughout Sarasota County providing medical, dental and behavioral health services to patients of all ages. These include OB/GYN services as well as on-site labs and pharmacies. Two clinics are located on the campus of Senior Friendship Centers in Venice and Sarasota, providing much needed services to seniors, the new “working poor.” This is in addition to multilingual services for women, children, behavioral health, dental care and more. CenterPlace Health relies on a combination of federal funds, private grants, and charitable contributions. When Florida refused to accept over \$600,000 in Medicaid funds, their patient load forecast increased substantially. Learn more about how we can live our Covenants by supporting these vitally needed services.

Our Sacred Conversations on Race continues on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays in Oasis and Zoom at 3 p.m. **September 25:** We Are Not All That Different: Race and Culture Identity by Seconde Nimenya.

**September 26, 2024 9:30 am in Syster Hall,** we welcome the Butterfly Gardening for Our Local Butterflies presented by Karen Rosenbeck. After providing some basic butterfly and gardening information, Karen will focus on native and non-native plants to help entice 16 local butterflies to your garden. Karen Rosenbeck is an avid amateur naturalist with a fascination for butterflies and butterfly gardening. After retirement as a Quality Management RN with the Department of Veteran’s Affairs and moving to Sarasota from Connecticut in 2010, Karen joined the Sarasota County Butterfly Club. Karen presided as President for several terms and is currently a senior Board Member, the Newsletter Editor and Webmaster. Please call the church to RSVP.

Our Racial Justice Mission Group and Green Team are sponsoring: **Dr. Lyla June Johnston** on September 27-28. She is a scientist, public speaker, poet, hip-hop artist, and acoustic singer-songwriter of Diné (Navajo), Tsétsêhéstâhese (Cheyenne), and European lineages whose wide-ranging work focuses on Indigenous values, hidden histories, and their relevance to today's climate crisis. She completed degrees in environmental anthropology, indigenous studies, and American Indian education. At the heart of her teaching lies the Diné concept of Hózhó, a belief system that incorporates moral values such as beauty, harmony, goodness, relatedness, well-being, balance, and order. The topics are wide-ranging—from climate change and environmental racism to recovery and restoration, from intergenerational and interethnic trauma to healing, resilience, and community organizing. Registration is online and the link is in the midweek message.

**Pastor Wes will be on vacation Sunday, September 29 through Wednesday, October 2. Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher will lead worship on the 29<sup>th</sup>.**

**Tuesday, October 8, 11:30 am in Syster Hall** ~ The Women’s Association and the Green Team have assembled a panel of experts on our water quality and conservation - Is our water safe to drink? How can we make it cleaner? How can we make it last? A panel discussion with: **Dr. Abbey Tyrna**, Executive Director of Suncoast Waterkeepers; **Michael D’Imperio**, Univ. of Florida Extension Agent for Water Resources; **Dr. Dave Tomasko**, Executive Director of Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. Here are the facts. 97.3% of the earth’s water is saltwater found in the

Ocean. The remaining 2.7% is freshwater, but of this 2.7% only 30.1% is ground water, that is, water we can access to drink. The other 68.7% is in glaciers and ice sheets. That means only .8127% of the water on the entire planet is freshwater. That's less than 1%, and, of course, we do not have access to all of that for drinking. That should give us pause. Join three experts of diverse areas of study in a conversation about our water. From how our planet's water got here and shaped our world, to the characteristics of saltwater and freshwater, to why the twain do not meet. We admire water's beauty and its bounty. We thirst for it. And we also fear its power, its quick ability to destroy, and its rapid warming. Without it, shall we be like sand through the hourglass with our time running out? **All are welcome. Luncheon costs \$15.** Sign up after either Sunday service or call the church office at 941-953-7044.

**You are invited on October 16 at 1 p.m.** to join the Brady Program and the National council of Jewish Women host Po Murray, Co-founder and Chairwoman of the New Action Alliance/ Newtown Action Alliance Foundation. This will be hosted in the sanctuary. **Please register online or by contacting Carol Rescigno.**

**On Wednesday, October 16 at 4:00pm we will have the first Singing Our Prayers gathering in our beautiful glass-stained Chapel led by Greg Chestnut.** We will sing simple prayers for the people interspersed with silence, meditation and poetry in a sacred space. The Prayer Circle invites you to be a part of it and bring along others for this unique spiritual experience. Our Prayer Circle has grown and now consists of Linda Butler, Greg Chestnut, Sheryl Overheidt-Smith, Linda Pursley, Maggie Revere, Jane Delgado Semidei, George Taylor, and Ruth Ann Waid.

**Gathering of the Waters** ~ As you travel this summer, please collect water from wherever you visit! Remember you can gather water from local Florida areas or wherever you find yourself in the coming months. On October 20th we will celebrate our annual Gathering of the Waters.

**Drumming as a Spiritual Practice** meets the first and third Tuesday in the **Chapel.** Our next meeting is on **Tues 10/1 at 3:00pm.** **New drummers are welcome;** drums are provided.

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **Sunday, September 22~ Welcome Stephen Fancher, Guest Musician**

8:45 a.m. ~ Early Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ CenterPlace Health Presentation

#### **Monday, September 23**

Prayer Circle meeting, 2 p.m., Zoom and Oasis Center

#### **Tuesday, September 24**

COLLAGE gathering, 11 a.m., Zoom and Oasis Center

Reading the Gospels in 50ish Days, 6:30 p.m., Zoom

#### **Wednesday, September 25**

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

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

**Thursday, September 26**

Sarasota Butterfly Group, 10 a.m., Syster Hall, please RSVP

**Friday, September 27**

Director of Music Search Team, 3 p.m., Oasis Center and Zoom

**Saturday, September 28**

Service for Carl Hendrickson, 1 p.m., Sanctuary

**Sunday, September 29~ Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher, preaching & Stephen Fancher, Guest Musician**

8:45 a.m. ~ Early Service, Chapel

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

**Pastor Wes on vacation through Wednesday, October 2**