

September 29, 2024 11:00 a.m.

*First Congregational UCC ~ Sarasota*



The Lord will  
bless his people  
with peace.

Psalm 29:11

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

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

**September 29, 2024**

**11:00 a.m.**

Flowers given by: **Lee Brockmann**, in loving memory of **Fred Brockmann's** birthday by his wife of 70 years, **Lee. Pam Hendrickson** in loving memory of **Carl**.

PRELUDE

*Prelude in Eb major*

Anthony Newman

INVITATION to WORSHIP

**One:** May we worship God in the beauty of God's holiness; may we praise God's glory and strength.

**Many:** **May we offer God our sincere praise; may we turn our whole hearts to God.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You*

#4

**Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, God of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.**

**All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays, Stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.**

**You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed, Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you; Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.**

**Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began; Boundless love is reigning o'er us, reconciling race and clan. Ever singing, move we forward, faithful in the midst of strife, Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.**

\*OPENING PRAYER

**O Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, the Triune God of our ancestors, may your presence here be tangible to us. May we acknowledge your power, your compassion and love. Your love is manifest in nature which surrounds us, your power to heal in the stories we hear. O, God, may we credit your power when we see the magnificent skyline and the thunderous waterfall. May we hear your compassion and care in the song of the birds. May we appreciate your delicate attention to detail in the beauty of the butterflies that are near us. O, God, we offer our praise for the magnificence of your creation and for your sustaining spirit within all earthly beings. Amen.**

PAUSE to BREATHE and BE

READING

“Mornings at Blackwater”

by Mary Oliver

For years, every morning, I drank from Blackwater Pond.  
It was flavored with oak leaves and also, no doubt, the feet of ducks.

And always it assuaged me from the dry bowl of the very far past.

What I want to say is that the past is the past,  
and the present is what your life is,  
and you are capable of choosing what that will be, darling citizen.

So come to the pond, or the river of your imagination,  
or the harbor of your longing, and put your lips to the world.

And live your life.

#### ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare, and in his temple all say, "Glory!" The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

#### SERMON

"God of the Storm?"

Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher

#### RESPONSE

*God of the Sparrow God of the Whale*

#32

**God of the sparrow God of the whale God of the swirling stars  
How does the creature say Awe How does the creature say Praise?**

**God of the earthquake God of the storm God of the trumpet blast  
How does the creature cry Woe How does the creature cry Save?**

**God of the rainbow, God of the cross, God of the empty grave,  
How does the creature say Grace, How does the creature say Thanks?**

**God of the hungry God of the sick God of the prodigal  
How does the creature say Care How does the creature say Life?**

**God of the neighbor God of the foe God of the pruning hook  
How does the creature say Love How does the creature say Peace?**

**God of the ages God near at hand God of the loving heart  
How do your children say Joy How do your children say Home?**

#### 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

*Beauty All Around Us*

Larry Nickel

\*DOXOLOGY/PRAAYER 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

*Great Is Your Faithfulness*

#423

**Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator, with you no shadow of turning we see. You do not change, your compassions they fail not; all of your goodness forever will be.**

*Refrain*      **Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness! Morning by morning  
new mercies I see; All I have needed your hand has provided, Great is your  
faithfulness, God, unto me!**

**Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses  
above, Join with all nature in manifold witness to your great faithfulness, mercy, and love.**

*Refrain*

**Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring, your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine with ten thousand  
beside. *Refrain***

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Improvisation*

Stephen Fancher

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ September 29, 2024**

We are delighted to welcome **Rev. Dr. Sarah Melcher** as our guest preacher today  
AND **Stephen Fancher** as our guest choir conductor and organist.

**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.

**Pastor Wes will return to the office on Thursday, October 3.**

**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.

The monthly **men's breakfast will reconvene on October 12<sup>th</sup>** after the summer break. Doors to Syster Hall will open at 8:00 am with coffee, tea and juice being served. **Chef Clarence Rogers** will prepare breakfast, which will be served at 8:30 am. Each attendee will be asked to share, in less than 2 minutes, one life-changing event. Please register by Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> by calling Sherry at the church office at 941-953-7044. Plan to come to catch up and or to meet new church friends!

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. **October 9 and October 23** we will be watching excerpts from the PBS Show on the History of Hip Hop Music.

**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.

**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.

On **October 20** following the 11 a.m. worship, members of Budget, Finance, and Stewardship will discuss our 2025 budget. This will be part of the livestream on YouTube and Facebook. Please plan to attend this important conversation for our church.

## **THIS WEEK**

**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

**Monday, September 30**

Food and Hunger Group, 11:30 a.m., Zoom

**Wednesday, October 2**

Lay Visitation Ministry Group, 10 a.m., Chapel

Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Thursday, October 3**

**Pastor Wes returns to the office**

Plymouth Harbor Circle Group, 2 p.m., MacNeil Chapel, Plymouth Harbor

**Sunday, October 6 ~ World Communion Sunday, Glenn Priest guest musician**

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

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ Birthday Celebration Sunday

**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*