

September 8, 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)

INVITATION to WORSHIP

One: Gathered here in the mystery of this hour,

**Many: We encounter the One whose creativity dazzles and delights us.**

One: Gathered here as God's people,

**Many: We celebrate our connection to holy ground where we have worshiped for over 70 years.**

One: Gathered here in this sacred space that hums with God's presence,

**Many: We sing out for all to hear our prayer and praise to our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.**

\*OPENING HYMN

*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

#565

**God, whose giving knows no ending, from your rich and endless store, Nature's wonder, Jesus's wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door: Gifted by you, we turn to you offering up ourselves in praise; Thankful song shall rise forever, gracious donor of our days.**

**Skills and time are ours for serving, that your will on earth be done: All at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the Church made one. Now direct our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone; born with talents, make us servants fit to answer at your throne.**

**Treasure, too, you have entrusted, gain through powers your grace conferred; Ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel Word. Open wide our hands in sharing as we heed Christ's ageless call, Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, honoring you by loving all.**

**Lend your joy to all our giving, let it light our pilgrim way; From the night of anxious keeping, loose us into generous day. Then when years on earth are over, and we've lived our human span, God, fulfill beyond our dreaming, all our stewardship began.**

\*OPENING PRAYER

*A prayer of gratitude for creation*

by Fiona Murdoch

**God of the universe, we thank You for Your many good gifts. For the beauty of Creation and its rich and varied fruits. For clean water and fresh air, for food and shelter, animals and plants. Forgive us for the times we have taken the earth's resources for granted and wasted what You have given us. Transform our hearts and minds so that we would learn to care and share; to touch the earth with gentleness and with love; respecting all living things. We pray for all those who suffer because of our waste, greed, and indifference. And we pray that the day will come when *everyone* has enough food and clean water. Help us respect the rights of all people and all species and help us to willingly share Your gifts today and always. Amen.**

\*RESPONSE

*How Can I Say Thanks*

#14

**How can I say thanks for the things you have done for me?**

**Things so undeserved, yet you gave to prove your love for me;  
The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude.**

**All that I am, and ever hope to be; I owe it all to you.**

**To God be the glory, to God be the glory,  
to God be the glory for the things you have done.**

**Just let me live my life – let it be pleasing unto you;**

**And if I gain any praise, let it go to glorify you.**

**With your blood you have saved me; with your power you have raised me;**

**To God be the glory for the things you have done.**

PAUSE to BREATHE and BE

ENGAGING SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:6-12

<sup>6</sup>The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. <sup>10</sup>God supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup>You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us, <sup>12</sup>for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

SERMON

*Do I Have To?!?*

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and LORD'S PRAYER (NEW ZEALAND VERSION)

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.**

OFFERING/ANTHEM

*Morning Has Broken*

S. Kirchner

\*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**

**God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place, Flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space; We your children, in your likeness, share inventive powers with you; Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.**

**We have ventured worlds undreamed of since childhood of our race; Known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space; Probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power, Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.**

**As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew, Children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you. May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor, well begun; Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are done.**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Now Thank We All Our God* by J.S. Bach

arr. Virgil Fox

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ September 8, 2024**

We are delighted to welcome **Glenn Priest** as our guest choir conductor and organist.

**Today, following worship, India X. Miller will be our speaker at COLLAGE. India is delightful, intelligent and funny.** She is a transgender woman who you may have seen at the Sarasota Farmer's Market doing one of her favorite things- "Transplaining." India will share her story and trans information she's gathered from around the world as well as answer any questions about transgender issues you've always wanted to ask. Please plan to attend.

David LaMotte's TED Talk has garnered more than 48,762 views since Jul 30, 2024. He will be speaking at Peace Presbyterian Church at 12705 SR 64, Lakewood Ranch on **September 8, 2024 at 12:45 with concert at 2:00.** David LaMotte is a songwriter, speaker and author. He has performed over 3500 concerts and released thirteen full-length CDs of primarily original music, as well as four books, touring in all of the fifty states and on five of the seven continents over his 35-year career. He lives in Black Mountain, North Carolina, with his wife and son, an old dog, and five chickens.

Please join our very own, **Lucy Tobias** for the launch of her new book, *Floating in Florida* at **Bookstore1, tomorrow, September 9 at 5 p.m.** - registration is requested (free ~ see midweek message) and there will be *cookies!!!!* From Pastry Art. Yum.

Our Sacred Conversations on Race will begin meeting on Wednesdays in September at 3 p.m. **September 11:** The History Behind Racial Stereotyping by Dr Erika Hall. **September 25:** We Are Not All That Different: Race and Culture Identity by Seconde Nimenya

Our Tuesday night Bible Study continues to read the Gospels in *50ish* Days while Wednesday morning is studying the passage for the coming Sunday. There is always a place at the Bible Study table for you.

**You are invited on September 14th at 8:30 a.m.** to help us tackle the weeds that have sprung up in response to the rain in recent weeks. **Bring water, gloves, gardening tools,** and we will have **mulch** to spread too. Many hands make light the work.

**SURE (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity) House meeting will be September 15 following the 11 a.m. worship.** This is a sacred conversation for us to listen and learn about what is on each other's hearts. We will receive updates on Affording Housing, Restorative Justice in school, and future issue work. **A light lunch will be served during this holy time.**

**Drumming as a Spiritual Practice** meets the first and third Tuesday in the **Chapel.** Our next meeting is on **Tues 9/17 at 3:00pm.** **New drummers are welcome;** drums are provided.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet on **Wednesday, September 18 from 2-3:30 pm** in the Oasis Center. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month. For more information, text or call Lindsey Huddleston at 630-338-9294.

The Green Team is excited to sponsor a showing of the movie, "Kiss the Ground," on **Thursday, September 19 at 7:00 p.m. in Syster Hall.** The movie offers a hopeful message about regenerating the earth. How we treat the soil can be the basis for combatting climate change and degradation from pollution. Please join us for this inspiring film, featuring Woody Harrelson as narrator and environmental activist. We offer a showing of this film as part of the activities celebrating the Season of Creation in the month of September.

**The Missions Team invites all of you to a special coffee hour on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to see 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, with seven locations throughout Sarasota County plus mobile and pop-up sites, they are now negotiating with the Senior Friendship Center to provide 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. Come join us to learn more about how we can live our Covenants by supporting these vitally needed services.

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), Tsétséhestâhese (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.

**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.

## **THIS WEEK**

### **Sunday, September 8 ~ Welcome Glenn Priest, Guest Musician**

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

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ COLLAGE speaker, India X. Miller, Syster Hall

### **Monday, September 9**

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

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

Growing and Caring, noon, SH

Spiritual Education and Growth, 1 p.m., SH

### **Tuesday, September 10**

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

Peace and Justice Meeting, 3 p.m., Oasis and Zoom

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

### **Wednesday, September 11**

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

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

Music and Fine Arts Team, 6 p.m.

Church Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m., Chapel

### **Thursday, September 12**

Finance Meeting, 3 p.m., Zoom

### **Saturday, September 14**

Fall Clean-up Day Outside, 8:30 a.m.

### **Sunday, September 15 ~ Welcome Glenn Priest, Guest Musician**

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

11 a.m. ~ Worship, Sanctuary and Online

Noon ~ SURE (Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity) House Meeting