*Seeking to love all people … growing in faith …*

*working toward God’s vision of justice, healing and joy.*

Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming/Creation Justice Congregation

**Worship Celebration**

 **Thanksgiving Sunday**

**Pledge Sunday – “Rising Up, Returning Home”**

**November 19, 2023 10:00 a.m.**

**Welcome**

**Prelude** *March* (from *Judas Maccabaeus)* Handel/Snell

 Alan Klispie, trumpet

  **Call to Worship**

One: This is the day that God has blessed us with.

**All: Let us rejoice and make the most of it.**

One. Let us sing, and pray, and listen with all our being.

**All: Let us come before God as grateful people.**

One: Grateful for all we have been blessed with;

**All: Grateful for God’s constant presence in our lives.**

**\*Hymn** *We Gather Together #23*

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving (together)**

Holy One, we give You thanks for the blessings we have received this year. While they may have been more difficult to see at times as we continued to recover and rebuild, we know they were still there.

Or maybe they were even more apparent - shone even brighter to us - because of the challenges we faced.

Either way, we thank you for the blessings of family, friends, and this spiritual community. We thank You for providing us with the physical, emotional and spiritual resources we needed to meet the demands of the time. And we thank You for calling us to use what You have blessed us with to bless those who do not have enough - enough food; enough shelter; enough safety; enough love. Amen.

**Music Meditation** *Cantate Deo* Mayo

 From *Water Music Suite* (Handel)

 The SCUCC Choir

 Alan Klispie, trumpet

**A Gathering of Thanks with Our Lord’s Prayer**

(please use the wording most meaningful to you)

**Invitation to Giving**

**Offertory Music** *Bist Du Bei Mir* (Be Near to Me)

 Alan Klispie, trumpet

 Dr. Mackenzie Albert, piano

**\*Presentation of Offering and Congregational Response**

(*For the Beauty of the Earth, v.5, #54)*

*For each perfect gift of thine*

*Unto us so freely given*

*Graces, human and divine*

*Flowers of earth and buds of heaven*

*Lord of all, to thee we raise*

*This our hymn of grateful praise*

**\*A Litany of Thanksgiving and Consecration (together)**

One: For all that You have blessed us with to use in Your name, and for Your

 purposes;

**All: We thank You, O God.**

One: Lead us to live each day with grateful hearts and open spirits;

**All: So we can better understand and accept Your call for our lives in this**

 **time and place.**

One: Lead us to practice the kind of mutually giving and receiving relationships

 You seek;

**All: So we can see that Your ways are not always our own, and that others**

 **have much to teach us.**

One: And lead us to build and maintain the structures and resources that will lift

 us not just us, but generations to come;

**All: So we can continue to celebrate each other’s blessings; comfort each**

 **other’s sorrows; forgive each other's failings; and bear each other’s**

 **burdens. Amen.**

**Ministry of the Word Matthew 25:1-13**

 **(New Revised Standard Version Translation)**

**Message Dr. Mark Boyea**

**\*Hymn** *Now Thank We All Our God #27*

**Blessing**

**Postlude** *Allegro* (from *Te Deum*) Charpentier

 Alan Klispie, trumpet

 **\*All who wish are welcome to stand.**

**A Thanksgiving and Stewardship Land Acknowledgment**

Long before there was a United States, or a Florida, the Calusa lived on this land. Although there are no surviving Calusa that we know of, let us remember and honor their understanding of the land as sacred, as well as their commitment to caring for the creation they saw themselves as inseparable from.

Therefore, on this Thanksgiving and Pledge Sunday, and in memory of those who came before us, let us also see this land as sacred and commit to caring for the creation God has now blessed us with.

 ***For Your Consideration***

*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.”* Melody Beattie, American author

*“Thanksgiving is a time when the world gets to see just how blessed and how workable the Christian path is. The emphasis is not on giving or buying, but on being thankful and expressing that appreciation to God and to one another.”*

John Clayton, English minister

*“I am grateful for what I am and what I have. My thanksgiving is perpetual.”* Henry David Thoreau, American author

 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today’s Musical Guest**

We are pleased and grateful to welcome Alan Klispie as our musical guest today.

Alan plays in the Sun Coast Brass Quintet, and has a significant career as a trumpet player in the Sarasota, Fort Myers and Naples areas.

**Stewardship Reflection Weeks Conclude Today!**

We conclude our 2024 Stewardship Season Reflection Weeks with a celebration of both ***Thanksgiving*** and ***Pledge Sunday*.**

Our theme this year is “***Rising Up, Returning Home”***.

By now, you should have received a letter and Pledge Card from the SCUCC Stewardship Committee. In addition, Pledge Cards are also available in the back of Fellowship Hall and in the Church Office. And, of course, you can always make a Pledge electronically by going to the main page of our website.

**Church Office Hours**

The **Church Office is now open Monday-Friday, from 9am-3pm**.

Mark is normally on the campus Tuesday-Thursday pending pastoral visits or off site meetings. Please feel free to just “drop by” or make an appointment directly with him by email: mark@sanibelucc.org or text/phone call: 908-477-5426.

**Please note that the Church Office will be closed on Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 in celebration of Thanksgiving.**

**New Assistant Church Administrator**

We are also extremely pleased to announce that **Tammy Flatley** has joined our community as the new Assistant Church Administrator. Tammy will be at the front desk in the Church Office area Monday-Friday from 9am-3pm. Tammy is already working closely with Church Administrator Jenny Chacon to coordinate our

day-to-day operations.

We hope you will stop by and welcome Tammy when you have the opportunity.

**Bible Study**

**Due to Thanksgiving on Thursday, Bible Study will meet this week on Tuesday, November 21 at 10:30am. It remains on Zoom only for now. Please note that Bible Study will go from 10:30am-Noon from now on.**

Each week, we explore the Scripture passage(s) being used in Worship that coming Sunday. These sessions are largely “guided discussion” in approach, focusing on your questions and insights from reading the text(s) ahead of time, with Mark facilitating and adding relevant context and detail as needed or wanted. This approach allows for participants to engage with the Bible creatively, and with an eye toward how the text speaks to us in our time and lives. In addition, they are great prep for getting more out of the Sunday messages!

We hope you will take the time to join in.

Through the rest of the month of November, Bible Study will meet on:

November 21 and 30

**Spiritual Exploration**

**Our Latest Spiritual Exploration unit has begun!**

***“Shepherd, Soldier, Sinner, Sovereign: The Life and Times of David”***

Tuesdays: November 21, 28; December 12 and 19

7:00-8:15pm on Zoom only

With the Advent and Christmas season arriving soon, we know that Jesus is described as coming from *“The House of David”*. But what does that *mean*? And more importantly, who *was* David?

During this unit, we consider what is known historically regarding David, but most vitally, dive into some of the pivotal stories *about* David that are presented to us in the Bible. We are exploring those stories, as well as the deeply complex portrait of David and his relationship with God that they offer us, as a means of better understanding our own.

**SCUCC Singles and Friends**

The SCUCC Singles and Friends group will meet for lunch at Mud Bugs after Worship on Sundays in November. For more info call, text or email Eleanor Miller at 860-318-1557 or eleheamiller@gmail.com

The group will also gather for Thanksgiving Dinner at Shell Point’s Grand Cypress Room **this Thursday, November 23 at 1pm**. A sumptuous buffet with traditional favorites will be offered. The cost is $42. Please contact Eleanor Miller by this coming Friday, November 17 to make your reservation.

Email eleheamiller@gmail.com or call or text Eleanor at 860-318-1557.

**Shell Point Women’s Group December Luncheon**

The Sanibel Congregational UCC, Shell Point Women’s Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Friday, December 8 at 11:30am at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Emily Kletzien at emily.kletzien@gmail.com.

**Shell Point Men’s Group December Luncheon**

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men’s Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting **Tuesday, December 12 at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Candy Atchison at JimAtch@aol.com or 561-714-4655.

**INTERESTED IN JOINING SCUCC???**

If you are considering becoming a member of SCUCC, or would simply like to find out more about us, please let Rev. Mark know. After you and he discuss the expectations and, as the old commercial says, “the benefits of membership”, you and he can schedule a Sunday that works best for you to become an official part of the SCUCC community.

**Like A Ride To Worship?**

If you would like a ride to Sunday Worship from Shell Point or Cypress Cove, please contact the Church Office at office@sanibelucc.org **by noon on Thursdays**.

 **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

Matthew 25: 1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.Five of

them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took

their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the

bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those

bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said tothe wise,‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and

for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’

And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and

the door was shut.

Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying,‘Lord, lord, open

to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’

Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the

hour.”