



Sunday Celebration Notes from Libby Tigner

Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.

For centuries, Christians have gathered on Sunday mornings and recited creeds, statements of faith which begin with the words, "I believe." Some Christians identify themselves as "believers" and frequently ask others if they "believe." In recent years, there seems to be a new wave of interest in atheism, or at least agnosticism, as folks living in the 21st century are grappling in new ways with what they believe about God and the meaning of life. In two of the last three confirmation classes, we confirmed as members of our church young people who said that they do not believe in God.

In my sermon this Sunday, I want to explore some of questions that surround the relationship of what we believe to how it is that we live our lives. Do we have to subscribe to a particular set of beliefs to call ourselves Christian? What is faith, if it is not believing in a set doctrine? If these are questions that you've asked, or wanted to ask, I hope you'll join us this Sunday for a part of our on-going conversations.

SERMON: *Do You Believe in God?*

The Rev. Libby Tigner, preaching

LITURGISTS: The Rev. Dr. Ed Bloomfield and
Ms. Kathryn Stevens

Next week Jerry Stinson's sermon topic will be "Galatians and the Erasure of Identity."

In Sunday School This Week

Theme: Follow Me

Scripture Focus: Mark 1:14-20

In Adult Education This Week

Sundays at 8:30 am in the Klar Rooms, upstairs in Pilgrim Hall

"The Historical Jesus for Beginners" continues, led by Libby Tigner. Coffee and childcare are provided.

Music on Sunday

On Saturday, January 31, our Sanctuary Choir will combine with the choirs of California Heights United Methodist Church and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Long Beach for the 37th Annual Mozart Festival Gala Concert. Included in the program is Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major (K.218) which features the concerto winner Helen Kim. The choirs will then sing F. J. Haydn's Mass in B-Flat (Theresienmesse) with soloists Robyn Frey-Monell, soprano; Megan Berti, mezzo-soprano, Carlos Carlos, tenor; and Steven Berlanga, baritone.

"Why Haydn?" you may ask. This is the 200th anniversary of great master's death in Vienna (May 31, 1809). After 30 years of work for the Esterházy in Eisenstadt, Haydn spent time in London where he composed symphonies and where he received the inspiration for his two great oratorios. Although he was no longer in the prince's employ, he still composed for the name day of Princess Maria Hermenegild, wife of Nicholas II. In all Haydn wrote six magnificent settings of the Latin mass; each

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Women's Retreat Brochures Available

By Libby Tigner

The Women's Spirituality retreat is only six weeks away – March 6-8. Be sure to pick up a brochure or download one from the church website. The cost is \$110, and scholarships are available. If you want more information, please contact Libby.

Gaza Benefit Concert This Saturday

The Muslim Public Affairs Council Foundation will hold a Gaza Benefit Concert on Saturday, January 24 to raise awareness of current crisis and raise money to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. Bringing together musicians, actors and civic leaders, the Gaza Benefit Concert is an opportunity to raise our voices for the voiceless people of Gaza, who are suffering horrifically from Israel's attack on their neighborhoods. The event is organized by MPAC Foundation, and all proceeds will benefit KinderUSA, two locally based humanitarian organizations who are already working in Gaza today to provide food, medicine and other much-needed supplies to the 1.5 million residents of Gaza.

Details: 6 pm, Saturday, January 24; USC Bovard Auditorium (3551 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles, 90089); tickets: \$20, \$25 at the door. For more info see gazabenefit.org or contact the Muslim Public Affairs Council at 213-383-3443 or benefit@mpac.org.



Ministers on Study Leave

Jerry Stinson is in Berkeley this week on study leave. He will meeting with nine other senior ministers from large UCC churches in the western United States to talk about problems facing large urban congregations. Jerry and Patricia de Jong from the First Congregational Church of Berkeley are the co-conveners of that conference. Following that conference, Jerry will attend the Earl Lectures at the Pacific School of Religion. He will return to his office on Friday, January 30. Libby Tigner is also on study leave this week, leading a women clergy retreat. She will be back on Sunday, February 1. The Rev. Ed Bloomfield, our minister of visitation, is available for pastoral cares and calls.

www.firstchurchlb.org

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Senior Minister's Blog

Jerry Stinson's blog article this week is about "Guanátanamo: Human Rights Versus Security."

Go to the blog and not only read the article, but add your comment as well: jerrysjusticejournal.blogspot.com.

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Music on Sunday

premiered in the Bergkirke in Eisenstadt. The Mass in B-Flat was the fourth of this series and was composed in 1799. For our anthem this Sunday, the choir will sing the first portion of the "Gloria." Please plan to attend the Gala Concert on Saturday. It is free (although we will receive an offering). See you in church!

Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 AFTER THE SERVICE

If you are the chair of a board, committee or ministry team, please submit your annual report to Ruth Warkentin by Friday, January 23.

Inter-faith Community Organization Forum January 25

By Bob Hildebrand

On Sunday, January 25, the Social Justice Committee and the Air Quality Ministry Team will sponsor an after-church forum to update our congregation on the recent community organizing activities of the Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization (ICO). Come hear how our church has joined with nine other congregations in Long Beach to organize their members and community allies around the issues of homelessness, housing, air quality and health care.

ICO's Executive Director, Patrick Kennedy, and Organizer, Luz Vazquez-Ramos, will brief us on ICO's recent successes and the hurdles ahead in the battle to improve people's lives around these issues. You will also learn how you too can become involved in these community organizing efforts.

We look forward to seeing you on the 25th at 11:30 am in the Klar classroom.

Third Annual Interfaith Community Organization Celebration of Gifts February 7, 3-5 pm Patterson Hall

Featuring Gregorio Luke and Honoring Rose Cabanban
Marking 10 Years of Organizing in
Long Beach Faith Communities

Enjoy food prepared by our member congregations, a raffle and silent auction, and a fascinating art presentation by the former curator of the Museum of Latin American Art, Gregorio Luke.

Tickets are \$10. For more information, please contact ICO at 562-984-2727 or info@greaterlongbeachico.org.



California Conference for Equality and Justice 18th Annual Interfaith/Intercultural Breakfast

Thursday, February 24

Long Beach Convention Center

Keynote Speaker: Marian Wright Edelman

6:45 a.m.: Coffee/Breakfast Boutique

7:30 a.m. Program

First Church has a table for ten. Tickets are \$38, parking included. To reserve your seat, contact Ruth Warkentin at 562-436-2256 ext 221 or office@firstchurchlb.org.

Theological Study Group Meets February 10

The Theological Study Group will discuss Karen Armstrong's *A Short History of Myth* on Tuesday, February 10 at 7 p.m. in the Pownall Room. Karen Armstrong is among the world's leading thinkers on human belief systems, and this concise primer on the history and manifestations of mythology will guide people from the Paleolithic period and the myths of hunters right up to the "Great Western Transformation" of the last 500 years and the discrediting of myth by science. The history of myth is the history of humanity; our stories and beliefs, our curiosity and our attempts to understand the world link us to our ancestors and to one another. Myths help us make sense of the universe.

February Anniversaries

- 11 Bud and Mary Ellen Kilsby, 53 years
- 13 Jerald Stinson and Kay Gault, 22 years
- 14 Kenia Casarreal and Jacob Adajian, 28 years
- 14 Bob Phibbs and Bill Pratt, 21 years
- 16 Louise Fiori and Suzanne Turner, 7 years
- 19 Harold and Neloise Curtis, 66 years
- 21 Randall Goddard and Scott Juhl, 17 years



Thanks from Friends Outside

Thank you very much for your generous support of our 20th Annual Holiday Party for Children with Incarcerated Parents (the newly-named "Thomas Fleming Rhodes Memorial Party for Children") through your contributions of space for our Long Beach Party.

Your efforts helped make it possible for us to provide new toys, a nourishing meal, door prizes, cash prizes, gift certificates, family photographs, and entertainment to approximately 150 of the neediest children in Los Angeles County.

Your support made the December Holidays very special for these children and their families.

Sincerely,

*Mary Weaver, Executive Director,
Friends Outside*

Wine Tasting with Food Pairings and Silent Auction

Presented by Vin De Pays
of Downtown Long Beach
and Urban Community
Outreach to Benefit the
Drop-In Center

Monday, January 26 at 7 PM
\$50 per person; \$80 per couple

For tickets and information:
Janet Rhodes 562-590-9520
or UCODropInCenter@gmail.com.

February Birthdays

- 1 Cathleen Clay, Miguel Criado, Madeline Sharpe
- 2 Loni Meeker, Evan Nutt
- 3 Douglas Schading, David Sroka
- 5 Laverne Joseph
- 6 Margaret Jones
- 7 Shana Hassan, James Woods
- 8 Ed Allen, Barbara DeJong, Cathleen Flynn
- 9 Martin DeJong, Catherine Jaeckel, Aaron Palmer, Patrick Wells
- 10 John Callahan, Don Pitchers
- 12 Reza AmirArdalan, Christopher O'Keefe
- 15 Bret Witter
- 17 Don Clay
- 18 Marjorie McMillin
- 20 Michael Fisher, Donald Taylor, Ray Vargas
- 21 Steve Schatz
- 22 Elizabeth Schatz
- 23 Katie Hickox, Jerry Wulk
- 24 Claire DeJong, Bruce Russell
- 25 Clarence Dendy
- 27 Barbara Kingsley, Lily Penner, Linda Silas
- 28 Raj Advani
- 29 Lisa Orr

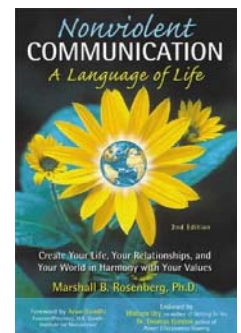
Nonviolent Communication Program at the Unitarian Universalist Church on February 7

The Peacemaking Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Long Beach (UUCLB) invites you to participate in a new program, "Nonviolent Communication: Peacemaking in Everyday Life," which begins in February. Conducted by the Rev. Terry LePage, director of the Open Door Communication center in Orange County and an ordained United Church of Christ minister, the program has two parts, a half-day workshop and a series of six classes. You may attend either part or all of the program.

Rev. LePage, a student of Marshall Rosenberg's work on Nonviolent Communication (NVC), calls NVC ". . . a recipe of words that translates judgment, blame, and disconnection into a language of honesty, respect and compassion." She tells us, "Even in situations of long-standing conflict or hostility, the process can open new doors to understanding and partnership. It is used all over the world in international relations, mediations, schools, workplaces and families." The program at UUCLB offers communication tools that can dramatically improve relationships by helping people develop empathetic understanding of others without compromising their own values. NVC is simple, but it is not easy. It is like learning a new language, and even a new way of thinking.

The workshop takes place on Saturday, February 7, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. The classes will be held on Thursday evenings, 7-9 p.m., beginning February 26 and continuing March 12, March 26, April 2, April 23, and May 14. The suggested donation for the Saturday workshop is \$30, which includes morning coffee and a lunch. For the series of six classes, the suggested donation is \$50. As usual, no one is turned away for lack of funds. (The Peacemaking Committee also welcomes additional donations, to help underwrite costs of the program.) UUCLB is located at 5450 Atherton Street, half a block west of Bellflower Boulevard.

Please contact Sandra Kroll (sdkroll@earthlink.net; 562-986-9886) or Nancy Mary (nmary@csusb.edu; 562-594-0127) for inquiries and registration. Be sure to reserve your space soon. Childcare is available. Deadline for those arrangements and for registration is February 1 (workshop) and February 22 (childcare).





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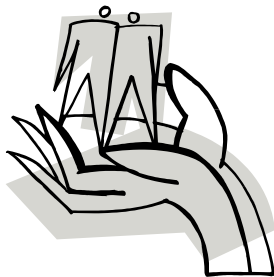
TO:

“Never place a period
 where God has placed a comma”
 [Gracie Allen]

Parish Concerns

Your thoughts and prayers are requested for Ranieces (friend of Bill & Betty Cole); and Rick Travis.

To put someone on this list, put a note on the Parish Concerns board on the Third Street landing or contact Ruth Warkentin (562-436-2256 x221 or office@firstchurchlb.org). Names are published in *The Pilgrim* for two consecutive issues.



Online Calendar

Don't miss out! Check the online church calendar at www.firstchurchlb.org/calendar.html for details about all church events. You can use the online calendar to email invitations to friends to church events and to set up emailed reminders to yourself. Just click on any event to see information about it.

You've got a date ...

Saturday, January 24

6 p.m. Kindred Spirits

Sunday, January 25

11:30 a.m. Forum on Interfaith Community Organization

Monday, January 26

7 p.m. Winetasting Fundraiser for Drop-In Center

Tuesday, January 27

7 p.m. Church Council

Wednesday, January 28

7 p.m. Sacred Practices

Saturday, January 31

8 p.m. Mozart Festival Gala Concert

Get *The Pilgrim* by Email - Please!

Please give us your email address so we can send *The Pilgrim* to you electronically. The email version uses no paper, which saves the church money and is more eco-friendly, it saves on postage, it has color graphics, and you'll receive it faster than the version sent by US mail. To receive *The Pilgrim* by email, contact Ruth Warkentin at office@firstchurchlb.org or 562-436-2256, ext. 221.



Becoming a Member of First Church

Whether you have been attending for a few weeks, a few months or several years, we would like you to consider becoming a member of First Church. When you are ready to take that step, please call or email Rev. Jerry Stinson at 562-436-2256, ext 230 or revjstinson@verizon.net.

February at First Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
<p>Sundays 8:30 Una Voce Rehearsal, Adult Education* 9 All Seasons Choir 9:30 All Seasons Cont'd, Charming Chimes, Prayer in Sacred Space* 11:15 Sheep's Kin 12:30 Drop-in Center</p>		<p>*Childcare is provided. To request childcare for a church event, contact Wally Hoeger at 562-436 2256 ext. 226 or whoeger@firstchurchlb.org.</p>			<p>The deadline for submitting articles for <i>The Pilgrim</i> is every Thursday at noon for the issue mailed the following week.</p>		
<p>10 Sunday Service*: Stinson preaching 11:30 Parish Life Board; Communications Committee</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Caregivers Support Group; Drop-In Center Committee</p>	<p>7 Service of Spiritual Wholeness</p>	<p>5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 Parents' Night Out</p>	<p>3 Interfaith Community Organization Celebration</p>	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
<p>8:30 History Ministry Team 10 Sunday Service*: Stinson in dialogue with lay leaders 11:15 Annual Congregational Meeting</p>		<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing</p>	<p>7 Sacred Practices; PFLAG</p>	<p>5:45 Beloved Bells 6 Board of Cultural Arts 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>Feb Camp at Pilgrim Pines (through 2/16)</p>		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
<p>10 Sunday Service*: Stinson preaching 11:30 Church tour</p>	<p>Office closed 6:30 Air Quality Ministry Team 7 Urban Community Outreach Board</p>	<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Boards: Diaconate, Membership Development, Outreach, Stewardship/Finance</p>		<p>5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>5:30 Farmers Market Board</p>	<p>6 Mardi Gras Game Night</p>	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
<p>10 Sunday Service*: Ed Bloomfield preaching 11:30 Christian Education Board 2 Memorial Service for Joan Stamps</p>		<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Church Council</p>	<p>7 Ash Wednesday Service</p>	<p>5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7 Social Justice Committee 7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>		<p>2 Air Quality Forum</p>	