



Sunday Celebration Notes from Jerry Stinson

Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.

This Sunday, a student from Chapman University will serve as our lay liturgist and will speak in an information moment about the Chapman partnership program of which we are a part and also about Chapman's upcoming Founder's Day. In addition, there will be special music by Lisa Bode Heard.

Several of my sermons in 2009 will rely on the writings of Rabbi Harold Kushner, a scholar for whom I have the greatest admiration. In this week's sermon, I will share Kushner's comments on the biblical stories of Jacob in relation to love, intimacy and friendship. Kushner said, "We are who we love. When Jacob could not love, because the circumstances of his growing up made it hard for him to trust anyone, he could not be Jacob. He could not become Israel, God's champion. Only by letting people into his life could he fulfill his potential."

SERMON: *We Are Who We Love*
The Rev. Jerry Stinson, preaching

READING: Mark 14:32-34; John 20:1-3

Next week there will be a joyous Quinquagesima service at which the Reverend Dr. Ed Bloomfield will preach.

In Sunday School This Week

Theme: Compassionate Community

Scripture Focus: Mark 1:4-45

In Adult Education This Week

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

The class on "The Historical Jesus for Beginners," led by Libby Tigner, continues through the end of February. If you are interested in this topic and have not been able to join us, you are welcome to drop in to check the class out. We meet on Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. in Klar 1 and 2, the upstairs classrooms in Pilgrim Hall. Coffee is available, and you are welcome to bring your breakfast with you.

Music on Sunday

It's Valentine's weekend, and Jerry is preaching on "We Are Who We Love," so the Sanctuary Choir will present two settings of love poems. The sopranos and altos will sing "Nigra Sum" by Pablo Casals (1876-1973), the famous cellist. The poem is from selected verses of the Song of Solomon: "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem: The king hath rejoiced in me, and brought me into his very chambers. He spake unto me: Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo the winter is past and gone, and the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth and the time of renewal is come. Alleluia."

The second love poem is sung by the tenors and basses. "When I Fall In Love" (words by Edward Heyman, and music by Victor Young) is arranged by James Mulholland for male chorus, piano and horn. I know you will love these two very similar yet very different pieces of music.

See you in church!

Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music



Getting to Know Us - Kindred Spirits on February 28

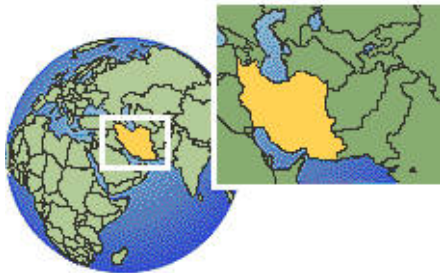
By Deanna Melzian

Are you new to First Church? Have you been attending a while but would like to make some new friends? Kindred Spirits, a group of GLBT folks and our supportive friends, meets monthly for a potluck dinner and conversation. Join us on Saturday, February 28 at the home of Nancy Harris, 766 Obispo. Nance is a long-time member of the church, but is both attending and hosting for the first time. Come at 6 p.m. with a potluck dish to share.

Need more information? Email Nance at Hike4Nance@hotmail.com, Deanna at Irishrows@aol.com, or Ron at massageguy-90278@aol.com.

Senior Minister Traveling to Iran

Jerry Stinson will preach on Sunday morning and officiate that day at the memorial service for Bud Kilsby. Then on Monday he will leave on a 17-day trip to Iran. He will be part of a Fellowship of Reconciliation civilian diplomacy peacemaking group going to Iran as guests of Iran's foreign ministry. He will return to the office on Thursday, March 5.



Men Alive: The Music of Motown

Two of our members – Ron Mullens and Joel Kemper – are active members of Men Alive, the Orange County Gay Men's Chorus. This well-known chorus has more than 120 singers. They will be presenting "Dancing in the Street," celebrating the music of Motown on Friday, March 20 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, March 21 at both 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Irvine Barclay Theatre on the campus of the University of California at Irvine. Don't miss this exciting celebration of Motown, including the music of the Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Nat King Cole, the Temptations and many more! For more information, including purchasing tickets, you can either call the box office directly at 949-854-4646 or visit the website: www.MenAliveChorus.org.

www.firstchurchlb.org

First Church Staff

Jerald Stinson

Senior Minister *ext.* 230
jstinson@firstchurchlb.org

Libby Tigner

Associate Minister *ext.* 224
ltigner@firstchurchlb.org

Ed Bloomfield

Minister of Visitation
bloomfield_ed@yahoo.com

Mary Ellen Kilsby

Senior Minister Emerita
revmek@aol.com

Nicholas Chaffee

Director of Sheep's Kin
nchaffee@firstchurchlb.org

Marc Dickey

Organist

mdickey@firstchurchlb.org

Tracy Halter-Balin

Assistant Director of Music
thalter@firstchurchlb.org

Wally Hoeger

Director of Children's and Youth
Ministries *ext.* 226

whoeger@firstchurchlb.org

Leland Vail

Minister of Music *ext.* 231

lvail@firstchurchlb.org

Heather Chambers or Melody
O'Keefe at Halter & Associates

Bookkeeper

ext. 225; halter.assoc@verizon.net

Yvonne SaMarion

Administrative Assistant and
Facilities Coordinator *ext.* 227

ysamarion@firstchurchlb.org

Ruth Warkentin

Office Manager and Newsletter

Editor *ext.* 221

office@firstchurchlb.org

The Pilgrim (USPS 602-580) is published weekly except the last week in December and twice a month in July and August by First Congregational Church, 241 Cedar Ave., Long Beach, CA 90802. Phone: 562-436-2256. Fax: 562-436-3018. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Pilgrim*, 241 Cedar Ave., Long Beach, CA 90802.

Editor: Ruth Warkentin

Deadline: Thursday noon

Periodicals postage paid

at Long Beach, CA

Progressive Christians Uniting 12th Annual Gala Benefit Dinner

Keynote speaker Van Jones, author, activist and President of Green for All. He is the author of *The Green Collar Economy* and his organization, Green for All, works to build an inclusive, green economy, strong enough to resolve the ecological crisis and lift millions of people out of poverty.

Monday, February 16

Cocktails at 5 p.m.

Dinner at 6 p.m.

The Center at Cathedral Plaza
555 West Temple Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Parking \$5

There are two seats left at the First Church table, \$80 each. Please contact Ruth in the church office to make your reservations and indicate if you would like the vegetarian entree.

Senior Minister's Blog

Jerry Stinson's blog article this week is about folk singer Pete Seeger's sense of hope. The blog articles will resume after Jerry returns from Iran.

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

Thank You from Downtown Associated Youth Services

Rabbi Herschel says that we must educate "not just the mind but the soul."

Since 1970, First Congregational Church has partnered with the Downtown Associated Youth Services (DAYS) to provide a free, non-sectarian summer program to the children in the downtown Long Beach community. DAYS recently became a program of a new 501(c) (3), Urban Community Outreach (UCO), formed specifically to meet the increasing needs of the underserved populations of the greater downtown area.

On June 26, summer camp opened its doors and served over 275 children. The summer of 2008 was a very exciting time for our campers. DAYS collaborated with Long Beach Opera and the Neighborhood/La Vencindad UMC to offer Opera Camp to fourth-sixth grade children of DAYS Summer Day Camp. The campers, under the direction of Long Beach Opera and The Neighborhood/La Vencindad UMC, put on their own production of the children's opera *Brundibar*. On July 31, the children performed the opera and exhibited their work to over 300 family, friends, photography and opera lovers. It was a stellar evening and an incredible opportunity for our children.

In addition, the upper grade campers displayed their own artwork as part of the program Storytelling through Photography. Under the direction of the non-profit The State of the Arts Project, the campers learned photography fundamentals and created their own multi-media photography books. The campers took art classes from a local artist, Daniel Martinez, as well as chess classes. For the first time, we also offered a Senior Youth Program designed for 15- to 17-year-old ex-campers to volunteer at the camp to earn high school community service hours, prepare them for the job market by teaching responsible work standards and ethics, give them meaningful, supervised work experience, and help them lay a foundation for becoming responsible citizens. The campers attended many field trips related to the theme of the camp, "Common Ground, Our Interconnected World." Over 160 campers traveled to the Griffith Park to visit the observatory and see the planetarium show. The weather, the view, the campers, and the exhibit were spectacular.

Moments like these would not exist without the support of First Church.

(Continued on back page)



The Pilgrim
 241 Cedar Avenue
 Long Beach, CA 90802

**Periodicals
 postage paid at
 Long Beach, CA**

TO:

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

You've got a date ...

Sunday, February 15

11:30 a.m. Church tour

3 p.m. Memorial Service for
 Bud Kilsby

Monday, February 16

President's Day - office closed

6:30 p.m. Air Quality Ministry
 Team

7 p.m. Urban Community
 Outreach Board

Tuesday, February 17

7 p.m. Boards: Diaconate,
 Membership Development,
 Outreach, Stew./Finance

Friday, February 20

6:30 p.m. "Our Whole Lives":
 youth overnight

Saturday, February 21

6 p.m. Mardi Gras Game
 Night and Potluck

Sunday, February 22

11:30 a.m. Christian Education
 Board

2 p.m. Memorial Service for
 Joan Stamps

Online Calendar

Don't miss out! Check the online church calendar at www.firstchurchlb.org/calendar.html for details about all church events.

Parish Concerns

Your thoughts and prayers are requested for Tim Bolton's sister and brother-in-law; Nancy Kelly-Hanson; Kelly Moffitt (Brad & Donny Lara-Gagne's niece); Billie Pownall; and Denny & MarJo Sebolt (relatives of John Baney).

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).

(Continued from page 3)

Thank You from DAYS

During the holiday season, DAYS, collaborating with the Board of Outreach, provided over 70 gift baskets to families in the downtown area. Starting in early December, the DAYS Committee along with the Board of Outreach received the names of the families in need and collected the food, toys and gift cards for the baskets. The week before Christmas members of First Church delivered the baskets.

On behalf of the Downtown Associated Youth Service Committee and the countless children who depend upon DAYS, I want to express my profound gratitude to First Church and its members for the generous support to Summer Day Camp and the commitment to the youth in Long Beach.

Nancy Valencia, Chair, Downtown Associated Youth Services

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.