



## Sunday Celebration Notes from Libby Tigner

*Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.*

This Sunday is the last Sunday of Epiphany – the season of the church year that focuses on the light of Jesus' life and teaching. In much of Christendom, folks will be observing Transfiguration Sunday. But not us. We'll be observing the somewhat more obscure but definitely more joyful Quinquagesima Sunday. From a Middle English word meaning "fifty days," Quinquagesima Sunday is the 50 days before Easter, and the last Sunday before we enter the contemplative and somber season of Lent. In other words, it's party Sunday!

Taking our lead from some Mardi Gras celebrations, we'll have a Dixieland band leading our music, and all of the congregational songs will be joyous and life-affirming. The Worship and Arts Ministry Team will be adding some festive visual elements, and the Rev. Dr. Ed Bloomfield, our Minister of Visitation, will be preaching. This is a Sunday you do not want to miss!

SERMON: *The Worth of Mirth*

The Rev. Dr. Ed Bloomfield, preaching

READINGS: Ecclesiastes 3:4 and Proverbs 17:22

LITURGISTS: The Rev. Libby Tigner and Ms. Miriam Herrmann

*Next week Libby Tigner's sermon will be titled "What Will You Give Up?"*

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## In Sunday School This Week

**Theme:** Sense of the Sacred

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 9:2-9

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## 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, will conclude. Coffee and childcare are available, and you are welcome to bring your breakfast with you.

## Music on Sunday

This Sunday we celebrate Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), let our hair down, throw our hands up and sing some of the old hymns and spirituals of our past. We will have a groups of Dixieland players from Blue Cat Music to help out. The Sanctuary Choir will sing an arrangement of the traditional spiritual "Witness" by Jack Halloran. It is scored for eight-part chorus and employs both traditional rhythms and swing. If you have not been to church in a while, this is the Sunday to make an appearance. See you in church!

*Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music*

## In Memoriam

A memorial service for long time member **Joan Stamps**, who died in December, will be held this Sunday, February 22, at 2 p.m. in the sanctuary. All are invited to participate in the celebration of Joan's life.

**Nancy Kelly-Hanson** died on Sunday, February 8 at Wells House hospice. The memorial service will be Thursday, February 26 at 12 noon in the sanctuary.

## Mardi Gras Party, Saturday, February 21

By Libby Tigner

Get out your beads and boas and come join the fun! Saturday, February 21 we'll have a Mardi Gras potluck and games party. Bring a dish to share, your own place setting and cup, and your favorite game. We'll have a couple of Wii game stations set up, with Guitar Hero and Wii Sports. We'll also have board games. Spirited Parenting is joining in the action by hosting a mask-making activity.



This will be a fun night for all ages, and a great opportunity to bring a friend. No RSVP necessary – just show up ready to have a good time!

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## New Member

By Jerry Stinson

ERICA STRAUSS, who is eighteen years old, is in her first year as a theater major at California State University at Long Beach. After graduation she hopes to become a high school drama teacher.

She grew up in Castro Valley in Northern California and was an active participant in Eden United Church of Christ in Hayward. Now she and her mother attend the First Congregational Church of Berkeley. Her father is a supervisor for the California Public Utilities Commission, and her mother, a psychotherapist, served for many years as the Lay Associate for Children and Youth Ministries at Eden UCC. Erica was active in Eden's youth choir and youth group.

At Castro Valley High School, Erica says she was a "choir and drama geek." She has sung in choirs since she was in elementary school, and so it is no surprise that she is already a faithful member of our Sanctuary Choir.

Erica knew about our congregation even before she came to Long Beach. En route to the most recent National UCC Youth Event, the Berkeley youth and our youth had stopovers at the same time in the Denver airport. That's where Erica met Wally and many of our youth group members. And now Erica is help-

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## www.firstchurchlb.org

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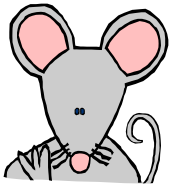
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**Editor: Ruth Warkentin**

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## The Church Mouse has heard...

... Yadira Ramirez, one of our former long-time nursery workers, give birth to twins, Makayla and Sebastian, in late January.

... Members Susan Hill and Matt Jaeckel, children of Barry and Melissa Hill and Catherine Jaeckel, were married at First Church on Saturday, February 14. Best wishes for life-long happiness, Susan and Matt.

... Casey Holman was accepted at Pacific Lutheran University.

*Please send your news to the Church Mouse in care of Ruth Warkentin in the office.*



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### New Member

ing Wally with the ZONE program by serving as one of the table adults each Thursday night.

Erica lives in a dorm at Cal State and loves the warm weather of Southern California. She is a life-time member of the Girl Scouts; likes Facebook, singing and acting; really enjoys Disneyland; and is interested in discussing religion and politics with a wide variety of people.

## Lent 2009

*By Libby Tigner*

### Lent Begins February 25

The fourth season of the Christian year begins this week. Ash Wednesday, which on this year is February 25, is the first day of Lent. The first season that was observed in the development of the church, Lent is the forty-day period before Easter, a time that has been traditionally set aside as a period of reflection before the celebration of Easter. It was also a time of preparation for study, prayer and fasting before baptism – which was only done on Easter Sunday. The word “Lent” has its roots in the Latin word which means “to lengthen,” referring to the growing daylight hours of the spring season in the northern hemisphere.

### Why do the dates for Lent and Easter change?

The date of Ash Wednesday is different each year, as it is tied to Easter. Unlike Christmas, which is always December 25, the date for Easter is tied to the lunar cycles and therefore changes each year. Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, the day when the sun seems to pass through the equator. This year, the vernal equinox is on March 20, and the next full moon will be on April 9. Therefore, Easter will be the following Sunday, April 12.

Once the date for Easter is determined, we count back on the calendar 40 days, skipping Sundays (Sundays are IN Lent, but not OF Lent – I know, it’s confusing!). The 40th day before Easter is Ash Wednesday.

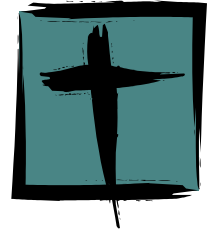
### Ash Wednesday Service - February 25, 7 p.m.

There will be a service in the sanctuary on Ash Wednesday at 7 p.m. This is a quiet time for reflection and prayer, and includes the Sacrament of Communion and the imposition of ashes. Music will be provided by our chant choir, Una Voce.

### Exploring Lent and the Liturgical Calendar - Sunday Morning, March 1, 8:30 a.m.

The Sunday morning adult education class will be devoted to understanding the liturgical calendar, with a specific focus on the season of Lent. Its origins, how it is practiced in different faith communities, and how we might approach the season will all be discussed. Coffee is provided; you are welcome to bring your breakfast. The class will meet in the Klar classrooms.

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## Lent 2009

### "My Lenten Journey" - Wednesday Nights

On three Wednesday nights during Lent, March 4, March 18 and April 1, you are invited to participate in a Lenten Experience. Playing with the idea of our spiritual journeys, we will use a variety of tactile and experiential tools to explore where our spiritual paths have taken us, where we are now, and where we may be headed. Each of these evenings will be designed as a "stand alone" session, so please feel free to join in when you can. These classes will be held at the church at 7 p.m.

### Small Group Meetings in Homes

Lent is a perfect time to build deeper relationships with others who are a part of our First Church family. You can do this by participating in one of several small groups that will meet for one evening during Lent in members' homes. The groups will all be formatted in the same way, with some specific conversation starters, and will be facilitated by church members. Watch for sign-ups for these groups after church on Sundays in February and March.

### Maundy Thursday

One of the most moving services of the year is held on Thursday of Holy Week, which is April 9. A Service of Tenebrae with communion, readings, and music will be held at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Bellissimo, our adult hand bell choir will play at the Maundy Thursday Service, the Sanctuary Choir will sing, and Libby Tigner will give a short meditation.

The Service of Tenebrae is preceded by a brief Footwashing Service at 6 p.m. in Sacred Space. This service involves the symbolic act of washing another's feet – a sign of our willingness to serve and care for one another in Jesus' name. If you've never done this, it might sound a little challenging. But it can be a deeply moving experience. Please consider making it a part of your Holy Week observance.

## Faith During Challenging Economic Times: Being Hopeful Together

**Sunday, February 22, 3-5 p.m.  
Long Beach Memorial  
Medical Center**

As a result of the challenging circumstances we are all facing right now as a result of the difficult economic times, many people are experiencing feelings of fear and despair. Consequently, the South Coast Interfaith Council is organizing a program for the community that will focus on the concept of hope, which is deeply interwoven throughout all of our faith traditions, and on the importance of focusing on hope in these trying times.

Speakers from diverse faith traditions will empower us with the concept of hope that is existent in our various faith traditions. Trained clinical professionals will also be present to connect the community with the invaluable psychological resources available to help us sustain a positive outlook amidst the economic challenges we face.

### South Coast Interfaith Council 56th Annual Assembly

**Thursday, March 5, 2009, 6 - 9 p.m.** (Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.)

Dinner, Business, Spotlight Awards • **\$25 - Reservations Needed**

Second Samoan Congregational Church • 655 Cedar Ave., Long Beach

The keynote speaker will be Arin Ghosh, Youth Chair of the Board of Directors of the United Nations Association of the USA, Pacific-Los Angeles Chapter, and an Ambassador for Peace, Universal Peace Federation. For reservations contact the South Coast Interfaith Council at 562-983-1665 or [scic@charterinternet.com](mailto:scic@charterinternet.com) or send a check for \$25: SCIC, 759 Linden Ave, Long Beach, CA 90813.

# March at First Congregational Church

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1 10 Sunday Service*: Tigner preaching 11:30 Communications Committee	2	3 9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Caregivers Support Group; Drop-In Center Committee	4 7 Lenten Experience	5 5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	6 Women's Retreat at Pilgrim Pines (through 3/8) 6 Parents' Night Out; Friday Night at First Church	7
8 8:30 History Ministry Team 10 Sunday Service*: Stinson preaching 11:30 Parish Life Board	9	10 9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Theological Study Group	11 7 Children's Bible Class; Sacred Practices; PFLAG	12 5:45 Beloved Bells 6 Board of Cultural Arts 6:45 Our Whole Lives; Bellissimo; ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	13	14 8:30 Leadership Day 3 First District Candidates Forum
15 10 Sunday Service*: Stinson preaching 11:30 Christian Education Board; Church tour	16 6:30 Air Quality Ministry Team 7 Urban Community Outreach Board	17 9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Boards: Diaconate, Membership Development, Outreach, Stewardship/Finance	18 7 Lenten Experience	19 5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	20 5:30 Farmers Market Board	21 6 Spring Fling
22 10 Sunday Service*: Milia Islam-Majeed, guest preacher 11:30 Forum: SCIC; Our Whole Lives	23	24 9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing 7 Church Council	25 7 Sacred Practices 7 Worship & Arts Ministry Team (offsite)	26 5:45 Beloved Bells 6:45 Bellissimo, ZONE 7 Social Justice Committee 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	27	28 10 Spirited Parenting (at Wardlow Park) 6 Kindred Spirits (place TBD)
29 10 Sunday Service*: Stinson preaching 11:30 Easter Bonnet Workshop 3 SCIC: Walking Together	30	31 Cesar Chavez Day - office closed	<b>Sundays</b> 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		*Childcare is provided. To request childcare for a church event, contact Wally Hoeger.	The submission deadline for <i>The Pilgrim</i> is every Thursday at noon for the following week's edition.



*The Pilgrim*  
 241 Cedar Avenue  
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**Periodicals**  
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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 Tim Bolton’s sister and brother-in-law; Kelly Moffitt (Brad & Donny Lara-Gagne’s niece); and Billie Pownall.



## You’ve got a date ...

### Sunday, February 22

11:30 a.m. Christian Education Board

2 p.m. Memorial Service for Joan Stamps

### Monday, February 23

7 p.m. UCO Board

### Tuesday, February 24

7 p.m. Church Council

### Wednesday, February 25

7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service

### Thursday, February 26

12 p.m. Memorial Service for Nancy Kelly-Hanson

7 p.m. Social Justice Committee

### Saturday, February 28

2 p.m. ICO Air Quality Forum

6 p.m. Kindred Spirits (at Nancy Harris’s home)

### Sunday, March 1

11:30 a.m. Communications Committee

## March Birthdays

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Frances Holand  | 19 Teri Brewster, Jonathan Kelewae  |
| 3 Louise Lawler   | 21 Michelle AmirArdalan, Christine Rhoads   |
| 4 Matthew Chavis, Jeff Gholson, Randel King               | 23 Shelby Johnson, Janet Wiscombe   |
| 6 Erica Sears   | 24 Randall Goddard, Jerry Mitchell  |
| 8 Richard Grauman   | 25 Jacob Cook, J. J. Halter   |
| 9 Brian Dumont, Julie Gholson                             | 25 Erin O’Keefe   |
| 10 Kelly Hanna, Curtis Heard, Roy King, Dottie Wine       | 26 Maria Alarcon, David Cartwright, Jordan Cook, LaVonne Crippen, Margaret Jacoby |
| 12 David Bourassa, Connor Bush, Bill Gamble, Chloe Haynes | 28 Marion Hinze, Miriam McKenna   |
| 13 Mitchell Earl-Itoga, Alison Mitchell                   | 29 Douglas Emslie   |
| 15 Jerry Cannon, Tracy Halter-Balin                       | 30 Akiko Dohi, Bob Phibbs   |
| 18 Melanie Hiller   |   |

## March Anniversaries

	<u>Years</u>
3 Lisa and Curtis Heard	19
4 Jim Watson and Daniel Bell	32
6 Gayle Connell and Margaret Jacoby	16
9 Carol and George Welsh	41
10 Jeff and Julie Gholson	30
18 Michelle and Reza AmirArdalan	3

## Online Calendar

Don’t miss out! Check the online church calendar at [www.firstchurchlb.org/calendar.html](http://www.firstchurchlb.org/calendar.html) for details about all church events. Just click on any event to see information about it.