



## Sunday Celebration Notes from Jerry Stinson

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

This year's joyous Easter service will include an anthem by the sanctuary choir plus special music by the Beloved Bells. The cross, covered on Maundy Thursday, will be undraped. With flowers, our children will transform an iron butterfly at the base of the chancel, and after the service, outside near the calla lily cross, more than 100 real butterflies will be released in the courtyard. It should be a wonderful day!

My sermon will grow out of two readings: one from the Gospel of Luke and the other from an obscure second century Christian text. I will share my understanding of the resurrection stories as important myths which I think lift up a sense of hope that can sustain us in difficult times.

SERMON: *Easter Hope for a Wounded World*

The Rev. Jerry Stinson, preaching

READINGS: Luke 17:20-22

Treatise on the Resurrection 48:4 - 49:8 (Second Century CE)

LITURGISTS: The Rev. Libby Tigner and Mr. Peter Wright

*Next week Jerry Stinson's sermon title will be "The Bishop of Auschwitz – Moving Past Remembering the Nightmares in Order to Begin Creating Dreams."*

## In Sunday School This Week

**Theme:** Now What?

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 16:1-8

*Please note that there is no Adult Education this Sunday.*

### Easter Breakfast and Brunch

This Sunday, breakfast will be served before church starting at 9 a.m. and the brunch will be served immediately the service. Donations will be welcomed. Brunch will be prepared by Brad Lara-Gagne.

## Music on Sunday

For Easter, the Sanctuary Choir will sing the final three choruses, "Worthy Is the Lamb," "Blessing and Honor" and "Amen," from *Messiah* by G. F. Handel (1685-1759). We have not done this selection in awhile because the text by Jennings is an expression of the redemption theology that our clergy, and many of our church members, do not preach. The images of the sacrificed lamb and the spilled blood are counter to the understanding of original blessing, not original sin.

But this is a big year in the life of the music lover. G. F. Handel died 250 years ago. Franz Joseph Haydn died 200 years ago, and Felix Mendelssohn was born 200 years ago. We love to celebrate these anniversaries. This is why we performed the Haydn Mass in B-Flat at the Mozart Festival in January, and why we are singing Handel this Sunday. Be sure to look for a Mendelssohn cantata in the near future. See you in church!

*Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music*



## End of Life Planning: April 19 Forum, 11:30 AM

By Bob Kalayjian

Just a reminder about the upcoming forum on end of life issues. We will look at both sides of death, just before and just after. We will look at the financial, emotional, medical, legal and practical aspects of this important subject. You will have an opportunity to do the planning and even some legal work (at no cost!) that will be of enormous benefit to family and friends.

Remember to get your Five Wishes booklet and fill it out before coming to the forum. Booklets are on the shelf on the Third Street landing near the bulletin board for Parish Concerns.

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## Got Eggs?

Wanted: 70 dozen dyed hard-boiled Easter eggs on Easter Day for the Drop-In Center. We did it last year. Can we do it again? Drop them off in the kitchen on Easter morning. The Easter Bunny thanks you.

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## Easter Calla Lily Cross

Calling all calla lilies! We will once again decorate our courtyard for Easter with our beautiful calla lily cross. Since it takes about 500 lilies to fill in the cross, I'm looking for 10 helpful people who can commit to bringing in 30 – 40 lilies to church by 9 a.m. Easter morning. Do you have these beautiful flowers in your garden? Or maybe your neighbors have some they'd be willing to share. If you can help out, please contact me at [bellgirl99@hotmail.com](mailto:bellgirl99@hotmail.com) or 562-754-3324 or just find me at church. Thanks so much!

*Tracy Halter*

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## Coming Up ... Mark Your Calendar!

May 2: Dos de Mayo Dinner and Dominoes with Speed Mixer

May 9: Eighth Annual First Church Golf Tournament

May 17: Pride Parade

June 6: Summer in the City - fundraiser for Summer Day Camp

## [www.firstchurchlb.org](http://www.firstchurchlb.org)

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## Office Closed Easter Monday

Please note that the church office will be closed on Easter Monday, April 13. There will be no staff at the church that day.




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## Senior Minister's Blog

Jerry Stinson will post two blog articles this week. The first will be *The Siege of Gaza (Part 2)*. Last week's article looked at what happened to the people of Gaza during the Israeli invasion; this week will look at what is happening right now with the continuation of Israel's blockade. The second blog article will be about Palestinian children singing for Israeli Holocaust survivors. In a sense the two articles need to be read together. The first may make us angry enough to increase our efforts to seek justice for the people of Palestine. The second may give us hope that peace is a real possibility.

Go to the blog and not only read the article, but add your comment as well: [jerrysjusticejournal.blogspot.com](http://jerrysjusticejournal.blogspot.com).

# The Board of Cultural Arts Proudly Presents Organ Concert with Sean O'Neal

Featuring works by Cook, Bach, Respighi and Mulet  
Saturday, April 18, 8 p.m.



On the Moller organ in the historic sanctuary of First Congregational Church

Free Will Offering

Supported in part by a grant from the Arts Council for Long Beach and the City of Long Beach.




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## Theological Study Group Meets Tuesday, April 14, 7 PM

The Theological Study Group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Pownall Room, and new participants are always welcome. Each month we read a book focusing on theology or biblical studies. On Tuesday, April 14 we will discuss a new book published by Polebridge Press entitled *The Mystery of Acts: Unraveling Its Story*, by Richard Pervo. According to Richard Pervo, "Acts is a beautiful house that readers may happily admire, but it is not a home in which the historian can responsibly live." Luke did not aspire to write history, but told his story to defend the gentile communities of his day as the legitimate heirs of Israelite religion. Pervo explores the problem of history in Acts by asking, and answering, the fundamental questions: Who wrote Acts? Where was Acts written? When was Acts written? Why was Acts written? How was Acts written?



*The Pilgrim*  
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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 Billie Besler (Marion Hinze’s daughter-in-law’s mother), Dana McNutt (Jim Deaton’s niece), and Patricia Verschoyle (Marion Hinze’s cousin).

To put someone on this list, put a note on the Parish Concerns board on the Third Street landing or contact Ruth in the office (562-436-2256 x221 or [office@firstchurchlb.org](mailto:office@firstchurchlb.org)). Each name will be published in two successive issues of *The Pilgrim*.



## 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. 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 ...

### Thursday, April 9

5:45 p.m. Beloved Bells rehearsal  
 6 p.m. Footwashing Service  
 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

### Sunday, April 12

9 a.m. Easter Breakfast  
 11:30 a.m. Easter Brunch

### Monday, April 13

Office closed

### Tuesday, April 14

7 p.m. Theological Study Group

### Thursday, April 16

6 p.m. Board of Cultural Arts

### Saturday, April 18

9 a.m. Youth Uniting in Mission (offsite)  
 5 p.m. Guest Chef  
 8 p.m. Organ Concert

### Sunday, April 19

11:30 a.m. Forum on end of life planning; Church tour; School-age outing  
 6 p.m. Worship & Arts Ministry Team (offsite)  
 6:45 p.m. Our Whole Lives

## Get *The Pilgrim* by Email

If you have an email address, please let Ruth Warkentin know so that you can receive *The Pilgrim* by email. If you receive *The Pilgrim* by email instead of US mail, the church will spend less on postage and paper and you’ll get the newsletter every Tuesday - in color! Ruth can be reached at [office@firstchurchlb.org](mailto: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](mailto:revjstinson@verizon.net).