



Sunday Celebration Notes from Jerry Stinson

Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.

Pentecost is an important day on the Christian liturgical calendar. It lifts up some dramatic stories about Peter and the beginning of the Christian church. Those stories speak of the presence of the spirit of God's love.

Our Worship and Arts Ministry Team has been working very hard to create a special Pentecost service this year. Brass instrumentalists will accompany stirring hymns, there will be dancers, creative visual symbols and a litany read in a multitude of languages. We will also be celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

In my sermon, I will look at the stories the writer of the Book of Acts developed to capture the spirit and imagination of the earliest Christians, and I will suggest several ways in which those stories can speak to our faith today.

SERMON: *Important Learnings from an Ancient Story*

The Rev. Jerry Stinson, preaching

READING: Acts 1-2 (selections)

LITURGIST: The Rev. Libby Tigner

NARRATORS: The Rev. Robert Stapp and Ms. Kay Gault

DANCE COORDINATOR: Ms. Tina Datsko

Next week Jerry Stinson's sermon title will be "An Early Image of God's Farming."

In Sunday School This Week

Theme: Acts 2:1-21 **Scripture Focus:** Spirit for All

In Adult Education This Week

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

Jerry Stinson will continue with "Occupied Palestine – Despair and Beyond," sharing experiences and learnings from his two recent trips to Israel and the Occupied Territories. This week the subject is "Human Rights, the IDF and Terrorism."

Music on Sunday

This Sunday the Choir will present "O Spirit All Embracing" as arranged by American organist and composer Richard Proulx. It is a setting of the tune "Thaxton" by Gustav Host. Most of you will recognize this melody from *The Planets* (the "Jupiter" movement). Proulx has chosen a wonderfully appropriate text for our celebration of Pentecost. This work is scored for brass quintet, organ, choir and congregation. You will have the music in the order of service and will join in with the choir. The brass quintet is made up of members of the Brass Ensemble of California State University, Fullerton. Come to church and enjoy singing with the choir.

Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music

Wear Red for Pentecost!

This Sunday we will celebrate Pentecost. Everyone is invited to wear red, reflecting the tongues of flame that indicated the presence of the spirit of God's love in the story in the book of Acts.

Young People's Concert – Sunday, June 7

By Tracy Halter-Balin

All members and friends of First Church are cordially invited to attend our annual Young People's Concert on Sunday, June 7 at 1 p.m. This favorite tradition will once again feature all of the youth music groups of the church as well as solo performances by many of our talented youth.

If you are a young person who is interested in performing, please contact Tracy Halter-Balin by Sunday, May 31. Hope to see you there!

New Pictorial Directories Are Here!

By Libby Tigner

Our new pictorial church directories have arrived! Everyone who had their photo taken by the Lifetouch photographers, each household that submitted a photo, and new members who joined since January will get a copy of the directory. They will be available for pick-up beginning this Sunday after church. They will be labeled with your name, so all you'll need to do is check in at the table in the courtyard and pick it up.

A new feature that we have with Lifetouch is that our directory will soon be available online! We'll be adding a link from our church website, and we'll let each member know how to access the directory just as soon as it is all set up.

If you did not have your photo taken or submit a photo, any extra directories will be made available as supplies last. Just check with Libby.

Pride Parade – Thanks!

By Deb Moore

Thanks to everyone who helped make our participation in the Pride Parade a success: bakers, staplers, donors and marchers. Special thanks to the early morning crew and drivers: Deb Buller, Casey & Ronda Holman, Bob Kalayjian, Deanna Melzian, and Cathy Chambers. Thanks also to our sign maker, Harold Kameya, our sign-up organizers, Jim Snelling and Joe Ernst, and our bracelet bundlers, Brad and Donnie Lara-Gagne.

www.firstchurchlb.org

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Craft Fair Fundraiser in October

Thanks to everyone for your response so far. It's not too late to participate! Please see Cathy Chambers (with the colorful "flag") before or after church.



Vandals Deface UCC Church in San Luis Obispo

Here is a link to the article about the hate incidents to which I referred in my sermon on Pride Sunday, May 17: www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/story/716886.html

Jerry

Senior Minister's Blog

The title of Jerry Stinson's blog article this week is "Reflections on Robert Fulghum's story about Fools and Fat Butts."

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

Interested in Serving as Lay Liturgist?

If members would like to serve as a lay liturgist at a Sunday morning service, please contact Bill Cole at 562-596-7546.

Bake Sale this Sunday

We're holding a bake sale this Sunday to support next year's Pride and Open and Affirming events. Come by and get some good baked goods and visit with friends or head off to the Nominating Committee meeting. If you'd like to contribute some baked goods, please let me know.

Deb Moore

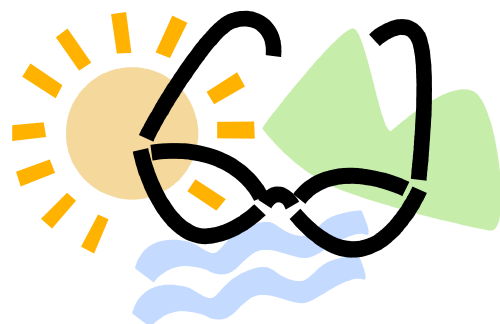
South Coast Interfaith Council Interfaith Cafe

Interfaith Cafés are small group discussions for laity, youth (ninth - twelfth graders) and religious leaders about how faith affects their daily lives and allows them to relate to and appreciate those from other faith traditions.

The next Interfaith Café will be Sunday, June 14, 2-5 p.m. at: Temple Beth El, 1435 W. 7th St., San Pedro. The co-host will be the Vedanta International Cultural Center. Refreshments will be served. A freewill donation will be accepted. To confirm your attendance or for more information, please call 562-983-1665 or email scic@charterinternet.com.

Summer in the City: Saturday, June 6, 6 PM

Summer in the City, our annual fundraising event in support of our summer camp, is this Saturday, June 6 at 6 p.m. Join us for dinner and an evening of entertainment in Patterson Hall. For further information contact Nancy Valencia at 562-234-2851.



June at First Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Sundays</p> <p>8:30 Una Voce Rehearsal, Adult Education*</p> <p>9:30 Prayer in Sacred Space*</p> <p>12:30 Drop-in Center</p> </div>	1	2	3	4	5	6
		<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing</p> <p>7 Drop-In Center Committee</p>		<p>5:45 Beloved Bells</p> <p>6:45 Bellissimo</p> <p>6:45 Our Whole Lives</p> <p>7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 Parents' Night Out</p>	<p>6 Summer in the City (Summer Day Camp fundraiser)</p>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<p>10 Service of Celebration*: Stinson preaching</p> <p>11:30 First Church Café</p> <p>12:15 Meetings: Christian Education, Diaconate, Outreach, Parish Life, Stew/Finance, Communications</p> <p>1 Young People's Concert & Ice Cream Social</p>		<p>7 Congregational Care Committee (offsite)</p>	<p>7 PFLAG</p>	<p>6 Board of Cultural Arts</p> <p>6:45 Bellissimo</p> <p>7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>5 Jr & Sr High Youth Beach Clean-up & Bonfire (Bolsa Chica)</p>	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<p>8:30 History Ministry Team</p> <p>10 Service of Celebration*: Stinson preaching</p> <p>11:30 Reception for Robert Garcia; Greenfest; Parish Life potato bar fundraiser</p>	<p>6:30 Air Quality Ministry Team</p> <p>7 Urban Community Outreach Board</p>	<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing</p>		<p>7:30 Choir Rehearsal</p>		<p>5 Guest Chef</p>
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<p>10 Service of Celebration*: Stinson preaching</p> <p>11:30 Bread for the World Offering of Letters; Church tour</p>		<p>9 Pilgrim mailing</p> <p>7 Church Council</p>	<p>8:30 Summer Day Camp Registration</p>	<p>8:30 Summer Day Camp (weekdays through August 7)</p> <p>7 Social Justice Committee</p>		<p>6 Kindred Spirits</p>
28	29	30				
<p>10 Service of Celebration*: Stinson preaching</p> <p>11:30 Forum on torture</p>		<p>9 <i>Pilgrim</i> mailing</p>	<p>*Childcare is provided. To request childcare for a church event, contact Wally Hoeger.</p>		<p>The submission deadline for <i>The Pilgrim</i> is every Thursday at noon for the following week's edition.</p>	

Why Aren't More People Joining First Church?

By Jerry Stinson

In rural churches and even in many small suburban churches, it is often a rare occurrence to have visitors on Sunday morning. But in our large, historical urban church, we have a great many visitors, and for that I think we can be grateful. There are even Sundays when it seems that we have as many visitors present as we have members.

Sometimes those visitors come only once and don't return for a second visit – our unashamedly liberal theology and our passion about social justice and extravagant hospitality may not coincide with what some people are seeking in a church.

However, we do have many visitors who return week after week. But even after many months or years of attendance, they remain visitors – not taking the next step of joining the church. In the first five months of this year, we have only received five new members!

Why? Is it because people are leery of making commitments to organizations? Is it because many of our regular visitors have come out of the Roman Catholic tradition where you don't really join a

local congregation but instead through baptism and confirmation you become a Catholic and then simply attend a local parish? Is it because people don't want more responsibilities? Is it because people don't see that it makes any difference whether or not they join?

Perhaps asking why people don't join is asking the wrong question. Maybe it would be better to ask why someone might want to join this church.

I had an opportunity recently to participate in a small group discussion with Michael Piazza, dean of the Cathedral of Hope UCC church in Dallas. Cathedral of Hope is one of the largest churches in our denomination with a membership of 3,500 members and 1,200 weekly attendees. It is also the world's largest liberal Christian church with a primary outreach to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Michael offered several useful phrases in relation to joining a church.

He said the decision to join a church is a *decision to move from being a guest to being a host*. Ours is a family of faith – a family that offers people sustenance and support. But like all families, those in a family of faith must not only receive, they must give. Joining the church allows a person to welcome others to “my” congregation just as that person has been welcomed him/herself.

The decision to join a church is a *decision like that of making the transition from dating to marriage*. It is a personal decision and spiritual commitment, but ultimately it is more than that. When I officiate at a wedding, I say that the rings are outward and visible signs of an inward and invisible love binding the hearts of two people together. I think deciding to join a church becomes an outward and visible sign of a spiritual commitment to a particular community of faith. Joining this church is a way of choosing to act upon your convictions. It marks a willingness to stand up and be counted as one who affirms that the essence of Christianity is about behavior more than belief – that it is about God's unconditional love coming alive in a community that wants to welcome everyone. It is standing up for a liberal faith that is not afraid of reason and does not require absolutes and dogmas. It is standing up for a faith that is not as much about Bible quotations as it is about feeding the hungry and mending a broken world.

(Continued on the back page)



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TO:

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

Parish Concerns

Your thoughts and prayers are requested for John Baney; Gwen Wiggins-Long and family (Yvonne SaMarion’s cousin); Giomara Whitesell (Melissa Hill’s friend); and Georgette DeBruyn upon the death of her uncle, Charles Cosyns.

In the armed forces: Daniele Ware (Karen Miller’s granddaughter, stationed in Iraq).

Names on the Parish Concerns list appear in two consecutive editions of the newsletter. Those in the armed forces serving in combat zones are listed until they come home. To put someone on either 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).

Online Calendar

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

Joining First Church *(Continued from page 5)*

And finally, Piazza said that the move from being a visitor to a church member is a *decision to take off the bib and put on an apron*. Joining the church marks a willingness to pitch in with the work of an institution trying to live out God’s radically inclusive love. It marks a willingness to give time, effort and money to enable this congregation to carry out its ministries of nurture, care and outreach. It marks a willingness to help shape what kind of faith community we will be right now and what kind of community we will become as we move forward into the future.

So if you are not yet a member of First Church, please consider joining now! Let me know if you are interested.



**Junior and Senior High Youth:
 Bolsa Chica Beach Clean-Up and Bonfire
 June 12, 5 - 8:30 p.m.**

Beach clean-up and marshmallow/hot dog roast. Please bring a snack to share with the group.

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.