



Sunday Celebration Notes from Jerry Stinson

Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.

This Sunday is our annual Outreach Sunday, so the hymns and liturgy will reflect our commitment to working for peace and justice in the global community. The Board of Outreach will present the Marion Morgan Award to one of our members who has worked long and hard in the quest for justice. Carlos Carlos will be our soloist, and Aaron Gonzalez-Palmer will talk about the Getting to Know You groups in an information moment.

In my sermon, I will tell the story of an encounter, while standing in line to get a hot dog, between a hospital chaplain and a homeless man.

Following the service, there will not be our annual Outreach Sunday Volunteer Fair. So instead, there will be an informal conversation about one of today's most important justice issues, health care reform.

SERMON: *Lessons Learned in the Hotdog Line*

The Rev. Jerry Stinson, preaching

READING: Mark 5:1-13

LITURGISTS: The Rev. Libby Tigner and Dr. Jerry Mitchell

Next week our guest preacher will be Ms. Milia Islam-Majeed, Executive Director of the South Coast Interfaith Council.

In Sunday School This Week

Theme: First in Caring **Scripture Focus:** Mark 9:30-37

In Adult Education This Week

Sundays at 8:30 am - in the Sanctuary on September 20 and 27

"Amazing Grace" is one of the favorite hymns of our congregation. But when the hymn is arranged for pipe organ, how do composers make so many incredibly diverse and interesting variations out of one simple tune? And how does the organ make each one sound so different than another? On September 20 and 27 in the Adult Education class, we'll explore several of these arrangements right at the organ, and discover what makes each one

Music on Sunday

This Sunday, the Sanctuary Choir will perform "Life Has Loveliness" by Curtis Heard (husband of Lisa and father of Clayton). Curtis composed this work for the Long Beach Unified School District 2008 Honor Choir. It is a beautifully lyric setting of a poem by Sara Teasdale. Although the part writing is set for SATB, the harmonic structure is more complex than one sees at first glance. I am glad that we will have had four rehearsals on this work before we sing it for you! Here is the Teasdale poem:

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up,
Holding wonder in a cup.
Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,

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Sunday Forum on Health Care Reform

By Jerry Stinson

After this Sunday's service, from 11:45 until 12:30, there will be an informal discussion in the Pownall Room about health care reform. There will be no speaker or planned program. Instead, members will share with one another their feelings about the issues involved with health care reform and perhaps share their own experiences with our health care system. The way the discussion will take place will make sure this is not a debate but rather an opportunity for all who attend to share their thoughts and feelings.

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Music on Sunday

Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,

Buy it and never count the cost;

For one singing hour of peace,

Count many years of strife well lost,

And for a breath of ecstasy,

Give all you have been or could be.

This Sunday we welcome our new soprano soloist to the music program of this church. Megan O'Toole received the Bachelor of Music in Vocal Arts from the USC Thornton School of Music. She was winner of the People's Choice award at the Long Beach Mozart Festival Vocal Competition just a couple of years ago. She spent the last six years as the soprano soloist for Bayshore Congregational Church in Long Beach. She has been featured in a number of operatic and musical roles in productions for the Santa Barbara Opera Under the Stars and the Opera Gang of Long Beach. Please welcome her with abundant joy. See you in church!

Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music

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Adult Education

so different, even while utilizing the same stirring and memorable tune. I hope you can join us in the Sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. on these two Sundays.

Marc Dickey, Organist

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Senior Minister's Blog

By Jerry Stinson

In September 2008, I established a blog and began writing regular weekly blog articles. Those articles have not been quickly jotted reflections off the top of my head. In general, they have been 600-700 word essays about contemporary issues in the light of progressive Christian faith.

Unfortunately, only a few people have been reading those articles. Each week, approximately 15 people go to the blog and read an average of two articles each time. I don't think those numbers justify the amount of work it takes to produce the articles.

And so I am not going to continue the blog. Instead, I will try to write some similar articles for the email version of *The Pilgrim* – just not on a weekly basis. Longer articles can go into the email version without requiring extra work by the editor or the extra printing and paper costs that a printed newsletter would face. We have currently have around 650 people who get the email edition, and that number of readers would justify the time and effort spent in preparing the articles. Those who have been reading the blog articles but who do not receive *The Pilgrim* will be able to find the articles through a link on our website.

Getting to Know You Groups Are Back!

By Miriam Herrmann

A group of us have been meeting for nearly a year, discussing ways to facilitate communication and fellowship between people who come to First Church. We agreed that Getting to Know You groups, modeled after those that were used when the church went through the Open and Affirming process, would be a good way to go.

That's why we are having small group get-togethers in the next few months. Each group would consist of four long-time members, and four newer members, as well as two facilitators. These groups meet either at church or in a private home and go over a list of ice-breaker and facilitation questions. There are a total of three sessions. One signs up for the first date, and then the group as a collective comes up with the other two dates to meet. The last session includes a potluck meal.

I am on the cusp of new member/ long-time member. I know there are many people I don't know at church but I recognize by face. When I try a new activity and meet new people, it's fun to learn more about who worships at First Church and what we might have in common or what we could learn from one another.

Please take the time to sign up for a group. The current first date options are Monday, October 5; Wednesday, October 7; Sunday, October 18; and Sunday, November 8.

Youth Music Group Rehearsals

By Tracy Halter

Calling all young people who like music! It's that time of year again. Rehearsals will start in September for the various music groups at First Church.

All Seasons Choir: A singing choir for children kindergarten through fifth grade. Rehearsals are 9-9:30 a.m. Sunday in the Choir Room.

All Seasons Choir Continued: A singing choir for junior high and high school youth. We meet at 9:30 on Sunday mornings in the Youth Music Room.

Charming Chimes: A group for beginning musicians interested in learning about the art of chime and handbell ringing. This group will meet Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the Dining Room.

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 241 Cedar Avenue
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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 Maureen Coleman upon the death of her father, Patrick Farrell (Marion Hinze’s daughter-in-law’s brother), Janet Rhodes, Cynde Soto, the friends of Jim Thomas, who recently died, and Jane Crandall.

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

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). Names are listed in two consecutive issues; military personnel in combat zones are listed throughout their deployment.

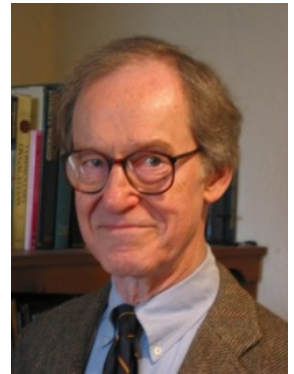
Online Calendar

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

Founder of The Center for Progressive Christianity to Speak at First Church Valla Lecture on October 3

By Libby Tigner

The Rev. James Rowe Adams, founder of the Center for Progressive Christianity, will be the speaker at the Sixth Annual F. Louis Valla Lecture on Progressive Religious Scholarship. The Rev. Adams, an Episcopal priest, will speak on the topic “Decoding the Myths and Meanings of Difficult Words in the Bible.” His talk will be based in his recent book *From Literal to Literary: The Essential Reference Book for Biblical Metaphors*, copies of which will be available for purchase and for signing.



The Valla Lecture will be held on Saturday, October 3 at 9 a.m. It begins with a continental breakfast and includes a two-part lecture, Q&A, and book-signing. Please register by calling the church office at 562-436-2256, ext. 221. The cost is \$10 and is payable at the door.

If you’d like more information about The Center for Progressive Christianity, you can visit their website, which is tcpc.org.

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Youth Music Groups

Beloved Bells: A handbell choir for junior high and high school youth that meets on Thursday evenings in the Youth Music Room 5:45 - 6:45 p.m. before the ZONE program.

Beloved Bells will have their first rehearsal on Thursday, September 17. The groups that meet on Sunday will begin rehearsals on September 20. Feel free to contact Tracy Halter with any questions about these groups. Looking forward to another great year!