



# First Congregational Church of Long Beach

## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### The Lenten Season 2010

Reflections, Learning Opportunities, Group Events, Spiritual Growth

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#### A Prayer for Lent

O God, empty me of angry judgments,  
and aching disappointments,  
and anxious trying,  
and breathe into me  
something like quietness  
and confidence,  
that the lion and the lamb in me  
may lie down together  
and be led by a trust  
as straightforward as a little child.

Catch my pride and doubt off guard  
that, at least for the moment,  
I may sense your presence  
and your caring  
and be surprised  
by a sudden joy  
rising in me now  
to sustain me in the coming then.

*Ted Loder*

Lent.

The forty-day period, exclusive of Sundays, before Easter is, in the Christian calendar, a time for prayer, meditation, and developing spiritual exercises and awareness. At First Congregational Church, we offer several opportunities for you to deepen your spiritual life through shared activities as well as some resources for your own private contemplative practices.

Peace and grace to you during this Holy Season.

#### Calendar

##### **February 17. Ash Wednesday, 7 p.m.**

There will be an Ash Wednesday service featuring the chant choir, Una Voce, a meditation, and the imposition of ashes. In the sanctuary.

##### **February 27. "Writing the Sacred," 10 a.m.**

A 2 1/2 hour workshop in journaling, poetry, and psalm writing with author Ray McGinnis. Cost \$15. Register via phone or email. In the Klar Rooms in Pilgrim Hall.

562-436-2256, ext. 221; [office@firstchurchlb.org](mailto:office@firstchurchlb.org)

##### **March 5-7. Women's Spirituality Retreat.**

A weekend of reflection and spiritual renewal, with the theme of "Remembering Your Story: Creating Your Own Spiritual Autobiography." Cost \$125. Contact Libby Tigner for more information. 562-436-2256, ext. 224 or [ltigner@firstchurchlb.org](mailto:ltigner@firstchurchlb.org). At Pilgrim Pines camp in the San Bernardino mountains.

##### **March 31. Book Discussion. 7 p.m.**

A discussion on the book *Making Rounds with Oscar*, will lead us into conversation about death and dying, companionship, grieving and end-of-life choices. Copies of the book available for \$15. In the Pownall Room, upstairs in the Sanctuary building.

##### **April 1. Maundy Thursday. 6 and 7 p.m.**

Footwashing. A ritual practicing the humility in both giving and receiving service. In Sacred Space at 6 p.m.  
Service of Tenebrae. Enter into the deepening darkness in the story of the last night of Jesus' life. In the Sanctuary at 7 p.m.

# Resources for Lent

## The Daily Examen

At the end of each day, reflect back, asking yourself two questions:

*“For what moment today am I most grateful?”*

*“For what moment today am I least grateful?”*

You might also word the questions this way:

*“When did I give and receive the most love today? When did I feel most alive? What was today’s high point?”*

*“When did I give and receive the least love today? When did I feel life draining out of me? What was today’s low point?”*

Spend some time journaling or talking with someone else about your responses to those questions.

The examen will lead you into a place of deeper gratitude and perspective.

Learn more about the examen in the book *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*.

## Reconnect

Seek out someone who you have not seen or communicated with recently. Make a date to visit or meet them, face to face. Be sure to spend more time listening than talking. Don’t let gossip enter into the conversation.

## Expand

Seek out a new opportunity for service. A few ideas: visit someone who is sick or confined, volunteer at a shelter, offer transportation or to run errands for someone who doesn’t have a car, do yard work for a neighbor.

## Say “Thank You”

Write three thank-you letters to people for things that they do for which you usually do not express appreciation. It might be a clerk in the store, a teacher, a neighbor, or a family member.

## Encourage

Write a note of support to someone who is ill or someone whom you know to be having a rough time.

## Forgive and Seek Forgiveness

Forgive someone who has wronged you in some way, even if they haven’t asked for it or even acknowledged the hurt. Think of someone you have wronged, and apologize.

## Go online

You will find a Lenten daily devotional, as well as Lenten prayers and meditations, online at [www.explorefaith.org](http://www.explorefaith.org). Email the link to a friend.



**First Congregational Church of Long Beach**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*A liberal church, welcoming of all, passionately committed to social justice*  
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(562)436-2256

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