



First Congregational Church of Long Beach

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY SERVICE OF CELEBRATION
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 • 10 A.M.
ONLINE AT [YOUTUBE.COM/1STCHURCH](https://www.youtube.com/1stchurch)

Our Mission:

to be a visible and prophetic presence in the church and in the world,
to steadfastly proclaim the radically inclusive love of God,
to be open to, and celebrate differences; to honor thinking for oneself,
to faithfully work for the inclusion of, and justice for all people, regardless of
age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, race or national
origin, or any particular element of a person's total humanity, and for all of
God's creation.

Worship Team

The Rev. Elena Larssen, Senior Minister
Curtis Heard, Music Director, Piano
Dr. Marc Dickey, Organ and Piano
Tina Datsko de Sánchez, Liturgist
Megan O'Toole and Carlos Carlos, Vocalists
Paisha Bleich, Recording Engineer
Adreana Langston, Video Technician

Please join in where words are shown in bold type.

Prelude – Dr. Marc Dickey

Riverside Blues—“Down By the Riverside”
by Joe Utterback

Call to Celebration

Who will we be?

What kind of lives will we live?

What justice will we seek?

With faith, let us worship together.

May the Spirit come and shape us in truth and freedom Divine.

Sound of the Singing Bowl and Prayer of Invocation – Rev. Larssen

**All: Holy Wisdom, we bring into your presence the fullness of who we are.
The hurting parts. The regrets. The murky and the messy.
We have been wounded and we have wounded others.
With courage and humility, we seek your guidance
in the mending of the worlds between us and within us. Amen.**

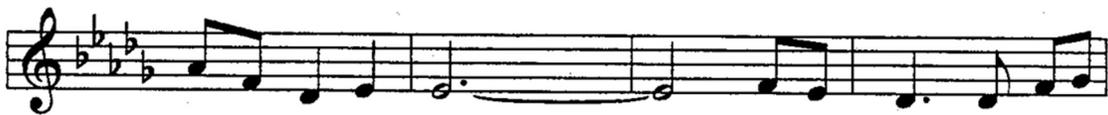
Welcome Song



O, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, Fling the



church doors o - pen wide. May there be room e - nough for



ev - 'ry - one in - side. _____ For in God there is a



wel - come, In God we all be - long. May that



wel - come _____ be our song. _____

Text: David Lohman
Music: David Lohman

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Greetings, Passing the Peace, and Children's Messages

Hymn #4, vv. 1-3

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

**Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, God of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.**

**All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays,
Stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.**

**You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you;
Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.**

Contemporary Reading

Plugged into Community, We Launch Justice
by Tina Datsko de Sánchez
read by Tina Datsko de Sánchez

*"...an expanded understanding
of church as a sacred launching pad
of community engagement
and change."*

--Rev. Traci Blackmon

As summer starts to wane,
this season of jacaranda blooms
and monarch wings will soon
shift to autumn splendor.

The Divine is sheer mercy and grace.

In our isolation, born of this pandemic,
what have we sensed?

A heightened thirst for connecting with each other?

A soul-starved hunger for hugging one another?

Seeing that it is in being together
that we meet the Divine?

The Divine is sheer mercy and grace.

So, in this age of world wide web,
we can plug into community
on our TVs, phones, and computers,
experiencing a homecoming of the heart.

The Divine is sheer mercy and grace.

Through virtual church and sacred Zooms,
we deepen our spiritual connection.
We continue to learn and grow and love.
We renew our commitment
to be transformation and live liberation.

The Divine is sheer mercy and grace.

And we venture forth through the internet
with radical compassion,
a team of change-makers
launching justice and healing
for our planet,
for all our sisters and brothers.

The Divine is sheer mercy and grace.

Scripture – Ms. Datsko

John 9

New Revised Standard Version

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”

Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

Special Music

Gather at the River
by Aaron Copeland
Megan O'Toole, soprano

Service of Prayer

Pastoral Prayer – Rev. Larssen

The tingsha bells invite us to a a Moment of Silence

Our Common Prayer

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

May the hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the people of the earth!

With the bread we need today, feed us.

For the hurts we inflict on one another, forgive us.

In the time of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For your reign is in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Amen.

Anthem

How Can I Keep from Singing
by Robert Wadsworth Lowry, arr. C. Heard
Sanctuary Choir

Sermon – Rev. Larssen

Hymn #478

I've Got Peace Like a River

**I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.**

**I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.**

I've got joy like a fountain ...

I've got love like an ocean ...

I've got faith like an anchor ...

Offering

The Invitation – Curtis Heard

Offertory – Dr. Dickey

Prelude on “Deep River” from Four Spirituals
Adolphus Hailstork

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*First Congregational Church
241 Cedar Ave., Long Beach, CA 90802*

Doxology: Old Hundredth (Hymn No. 7)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God with all the hosts above;

Praise God in wonder, joy and love.

Prayer of Thanksgiving – Rev. Larssen

Benediction – Rev. Larssen

Benediction Response

Shall We Gather at the River
Sanctuary Choir

Postlude – Dr. Dickey

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You (Hymn to Joy)
Beethoven, arr. Ellsasser

Please join us for All Church Zoom Coffee Hour, hosted by Curtis Heard.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/93177044296?pwd=dW81SEx3aTZJQVJxOTRFeWNDNEJGdz>

09

Meeting ID: 931 7704 4296

Password: 414024

Call in: 669-900-6833

Subscribe to *The Pilgrim*, our weekly e-news, by contacting
office@firstchurchlb.org.

The sanctuary flowers today are from Cynthia Snell and Bryn Turner “in celebration of all September anniversaries, including our own and our dear friends the Mitchells.”

The prayers are from Liturgy That Matters by enfleshed.com.

Birthdays This Week

- 13 Tom Pokladowski
- 14 Christopher Holman, Janet Rhodes
- 15 Sookie Garrison
- 16 Martha Duncan
- 17 Sue Johnson
- 18 Jim Deaton, Rick Kenworthy
- 19 Karen Cannon, Annaliese Guthmann,
Mike Roberts, Dylan Whitesell

Parish Concerns

Please remember Kit and Bonnie Wilke; Rob, the husband of Marc Dickey's colleague Ann; Linda, Scott, and Megan Ramsay upon the death of Linda's mother, Bobbi Mellody; Cynthia King upon the death of her father, Jack King; Pilgrim Pines, threatened by wildfire; Chuck and Linda, friends of Kathy Young; and Jon Boyden.

This Week at First Church

All activities are on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

For information about these meetings, please see this week's *Pilgrim*.

Sunday, September 13

- 9 am Adult Education
Koinonia Room Coffee Hour
- 10 am Service of Celebration of God's Love – FCCLB YouTube Channel
- 11 am All Church Coffee Hour
- 11:15 am Service of Prayer and Communion
- 12 pm Board of Stewardship and Finance Meeting
- 1 pm Youth Kayaking – Kayaks on the Water, 5411 E Ocean Blvd, LB
- 1:30 Drop-In Center – on-site

Tuesday, September 15

- 10 am Senior Coffee and Conversation
- 7 pm Urban Community Outreach Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 16

- 6:30 pm Sacred Practices
- 8 pm Parents & Guardian Support Group

Thursday, September 17

- 5 pm Jubellance Rehearsal – Kilsby Courtyard
- 6 pm Bellissimo Rehearsal – Kilsby Courtyard
- 7:30 pm Sanctuary Choir Gathering

Saturday, September 19

- 10 am Urban Community Outreach Food Drive – Maple Way alley
- 5 pm Guest Chef – Offsite

Sunday, September 20

- 9 am Adult Education
Koinonia Room Coffee Hour
- 10 am Service of Celebration of God's Love – FCCLB YouTube Channel
- 11 am All Church Coffee Hour
- 11:15 am Service of Prayer and Communion
- 11:30 am Women's Group
- 1:30 Drop-In Center – on-site
- 2 pm Youth Group
- 5 pm Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Kilsby Courtyard

The church staff is primarily working from home.

A staff person from the Maintenance Department is onsite Monday-Friday.

Rev. Larssen is available for phone counseling by appointment.