



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MARCH 9, 2025 • 10 A.M.

1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

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.

***Please join in where words are shown in bold type.
Please stand if you are able for items with an asterisk*.***

*Centering ourselves with the sound of the chime
and the Land Acknowledgement*

Prelude

Elegy
Gordon Young

Dr. Marc Dickey

Invocation

The Rev. Wally Hoeger

***Call to Celebration**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg and The Rev. Wally Hoeger

One: We cultivate the earth—

Many: When we till the ground and lay new seeds.

One: We cultivate safe space—

Many: When we pay attention to what others need.

One: We cultivate worship—

Many: When we come together, our hearts on our sleeves.

One: In this worship, may we be honest and present;

Many: May we be faithful and gracious.

One: For the God of the soil, who is the God of our hearts, is near.

Many: Let us worship Holy God.

***Processional Hymn #425 For the Fruit of All Creation**

See page 8

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Welcome Song

The children are invited to come forward during this song.

O, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, Fling the
 church doors o - pen wide. May there be room e - nough for
 wel - come, In God we all be - long May that
 ev - 'ry - one in - side. For in God there is a
 wel - come be our song.

Text: David Lohman
 Music: David Lohman

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Shedding What Gets in the Way
by Tina Datsko de Sánchez

We are on a journey to live in community.
Creator, help us to shed what gets in the way.

Where stagnating guilt has choked off our roots
and insecurity weakened our limbs,
where shame has kept us hidden from sun light,
Creator, bring now your cleansing presence.

Let inundating spirit soften hearts
hardened by anger, resentment, envy.
Let inundating spirit soften thoughts
and words, so a green shoot stirs in the seed.

Help us, like wise gardeners, to cultivate
all that is fruitful within our own minds.
Help us, God, to shed our need to be right,
pulling up by the roots the weeds of blame.

When worry comes over us like a cloud,
dark and threatening, help us to recall
that clouds are just moisture clinging to dust.
Now let our rain fall and the sun burn through.

We are on a journey to live in community.
Creator, help us to shed what gets in the way.

Sermon

Rev. Hoeger

***Hymn #209**

O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free
Verses 1,2,3 & 6
See page 9



Resist By Lisle Gwynn Garrity
Inspired by Luke 4:1-13
charcoal & acrylic paint on paper

While in the wilderness, what does Jesus resist? The temptation to provide only for himself instead of living into God's abundant manna. The temptation to obtain unlimited power and control. The temptation to coerce faith or prove God's power. The temptation to rule above the earth instead of from within it.

In his own 40-day Lent, Jesus is reformed and readied for his ministry, one defined by humility, justice, and compassion. I imagine he had to let go of ego and self-serving desires in order to cultivate a leadership ethic that upends

structures of power and oppression. He had to let go of personal profit in order to cultivate inner strength.

In this image, a flash of red, symbolizing evil and temptation, snakes around Jesus' head, as if to suffocate him. But a halo of gold, emanating from his steadfast expression, protects him from evil's destruction.

— Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Prayers of the People

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

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.**

Offering

Invitation to Give
Offertory

Aria
Gordon Young

Tina Datsko de Sánchez
Dr. Dickey

*Scan for our secure online donation site or go to
bit.ly/FCCLBGive*

*Or mail a check to 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 Dedication

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

***Recessional Hymn #77** Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

See page 10

***Benediction**

Rev. Hoeger

Postlude

Plein Jeu a la Couperin
Gordon Young

Dr. Dickey

One License: 706147-A (*in support of our livestream*)

The sanctuary flowers this morning are provided by Marion Hinze "in grateful thanks for all the healing prayers made for my recovery. The cards, visits, and phone calls are greatly appreciated."

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: Tim Mountain, Karen Miller, Penney Wilson-Borth, Janet Rhodes, Patrick O'Neal and family, Wayne Hester, Joanne Paine, Aida Porteneuve, Kathleen ODaniels, Marion Hinze, Beau Chandler, Ben Rockwell, Dale Whitney, and the loved ones of Yesenia Hernandez.

To submit joys and concerns for inclusion in the bulletin and the newsletter and to subscribe to the newsletter, contact the office: office@firstchurchlb.org.

Birthdays This Week – Happy Birthday!

09 Julie Gholson, Olivia Esteves
10 Dottie Wine, Danny Reich, Kathy
Wallace-Phelps, Curtis Heard
12 Bill Gamble

13 Alison Mitchell
14 Sarah Schoolcraft
15 Wayne Hester, Tracy Halter-Balin

Adult Ed Forum Series: “What the Bible Really Says about Sex”

You are invited to join us as we explore sex, sexuality, gender identity and healthy relationships in the Bible. We will address the “clobber passages” that are so often misused, and also discuss how we build a just love ethic in our lives around sex and relationships.

**Sundays in the Koinonia Room:
March 9th 11:30 am, March 16th at Noon,
and March 23rd, 11:30 am**

*First Congregational Church of Long Beach
United Church of Christ
firstchurchlb.org*

Have you wondered "What the Bible Really Says about Sex"? You are invited to join us for a three-session Adult Ed Forum Series after worship. Child care is available during each class, and the class will be available on Zoom. Our first session will explore the incorrect ways that the “clobber passages” have been used to condemn some sexualities and gender expressions. Our second session will explore positive Biblical teachings about gender and sexuality, and our third session will build a faithful ethic of love and mutuality for all relationships.



For the Fruit of All Creation

425

Fred Pratt Green, 1970

1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
 2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
 3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.

For God's gifts to ev - ery na - tion, thanks be to God.
 In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
 For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.

For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,
 In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,
 For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con - found us,

Fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
 In the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
 Most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

This text was written in response to a request for a new harvest hymn for an existing tune. After its publication in England in 1970, it became popular in many countries and can be found set to various tunes.

Tune: AR HYD Y NOS 8.4.8.4.8.8.8.4.
 Welsh traditional melody
 Musical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, Dublin, 1784
 Harm. L. O. Emerson, 1906
 For another harmonization, see 82

Verses 1, 2, 3 & 6

O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free

209

Latin, 15th century
 Transl. The New Century Hymnal, 1994

Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Phil. 2:5-11;
 John 17:1-26; 19:1-3, 16-18

1 O Love, how vast, how flow - ing free, O Love how
 2 Not as an an - gel vis - it - ing, nor form ce -
 3 For us bap - tized, and fast - ing long, for us was
 4 For us was beat - en, whipped, and tried, and tak - en

filled with ec - sta - sy, That God a hu - man
 les - tial or - bit - ing, But born in flesh God
 tempt - ed by the wrong, For us the pangs of
 to be cru - ci - fied, So Love all this for

form should take, and mor - tal be for mor - tals' sake.
 chose to be, robed in our own hu - man - i - ty.
 hun - ger knew; for us the Tempt - er o - ver - threw.
 us en - dured, and dy - ing, life for us pro - cured.

5 A-ris-ing from the dead a-gain,
 our Sov-ereign goes on high to reign;
 And sends the Spir-it to a-bide
 for strength and sol-ace at our side.

6 Then for God's bound-less love
 sing praise
 through end-less a-ges, count-less days;
 By Love we have been rec-on-ciled:
 sal-va-tion gained through
 God's own Child.

CLOSE OF WORSHIP

77

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Luke 2:29; Rom. 1:16

Attrib. to John Fawcett, 1773; alt.

1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless - ing; fill our hearts with
2 We give thanks and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's
3 So that when your love shall call us, Sav - ior, from the

joy and peace; Let us each your love pos - sess - ing,
joy - ful sound; May the fruits of your sal - va - tion
world a - way, Fear of death shall not ap - pall us,

tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: Oh, re - fresh us,
in our hearts and lives a - bound: Ev - er faith - ful,
glad your sum - mons to o - bey: May we ev - er,

oh, re - fresh us, trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.
ev - er faith - ful to the truth may we be found.
may we ev - er live with you in end - less day,

Influenced by George Whitefield's preaching, John Fawcett joined the Baptist church, and served as minister in Wainsgate, England, for fifty-four years. Yielding to the persuasion of his parishioners, he declined invitations to move elsewhere. He wrote more than 160 hymns.

This Week at First Church

Sunday, March 9

- 8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
- 9:30 AM Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room
Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
- 10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
Sunday School – Vaughn 4, Klar 1, Sacred Space, & High School Room
- 11:15 AM Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Bell Room
- 11:30 AM Adult Ed Forum: What the Bible Really Says about Sex, Part 1 – Koinonia Room
- 1:30 AM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall

Monday, March 10

- 10:00 AM Archives Group – Ramsay Dining Room
- 7:00 PM DAYS Board Meeting – Zoom

Tuesday, March 11

- 10:00 AM Handmakers Small Group Meeting – Koinonia Room
- 6:00 PM Women’s Book Group – Offsite
- 6:00 PM Budget Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 12

- 7:00 PM Sacred Practices – Sacred Space

Thursday, March 13

- 4:00 PM DAYS Safe Passage – Klar 2 & 3
- 5:00 PM Jubellance Rehearsal – Bell Room
- 5:30 PM DAYS Leaders LB – Klar 2 & 3
- 6:00 PM Bellissimo Rehearsal – Bell Room
- 7:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Friday, March 14

- 1:30 PM DAYS Grocery Program – Patterson Hall & Potholder Lot

Saturday, March 15

- 9:30 AM Golf Group – Off-site at a local golf course

Sunday, March 16

- 8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
- 9:30 AM Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room
Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
- 10:00 AM Service of Celebration - Sanctuary & YouTube.com/1stChurch
Sunday School – Vaughn 4, Klar 1, Sacred Space & High School Room
- 11:15 AM Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Bell Room
St. Patrick’s Day Baked Potato Bar – Ramsay Dining Hall
- 11:30 AM Women’s Group – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 12:00 PM Adult Ed Forum: What the Bible Really Says About Sex, part 2 – Koinonia



CHURCH OFFICERS

Randel King, Moderator
Doug Emslie, Vice Moderator
Julie Gholson, Treasurer
Kirsten Pickus, Secretary

BOARD CHAIRS

Building, Historic Preservation &
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Cultural Arts: Tim Mountain & Julie
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Diaconate: Charlotte Waldo & Harold
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Social Justice and Outreach: Chris Bobo
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Tina Datsko de Sánchez

COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

Curtis Heard

HISTORIAN

Bob Kalayjian

BOOKKEEPER

Melody O'Keefe and
Heather Chambers at Heather R.
Chambers, CPA, Inc.

CLERGY

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Rev. Wally Hoeger, Associate Minister,
whoeger@firstchurchlb.org

MUSIC STAFF

Curtis Heard, Director of Music
Tracy Halter-Balin, Associate Director of
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Dr. Marc Dickey, Organist
Megan O'Toole, Soprano Soloist
Lisa Bode Heard, Alto Soloist
Charlie Carlos, Tenor Soloist
George Carson, Bass Soloist

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Eric Peterson, Business Manager
Rhyan Humphrey, Office Manager
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CLERGY IN OUR COMMUNITY

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Rev. Katy Hyman, Director of Palliative
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Rev. Laverne R. Joseph, Retired from
Retirement Housing Foundation