



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 19, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

EARTH DAY SUNDAY

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

In Evening Air
Aaron Copland

Dr. Marc Dickey

Acolytes: Zoe & Deven Dasgupta-Tsinikas

Invocation

The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

***Call to Celebration**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg and the Rev. Wally Hoeger

One: The land holds us.

Many: Sky breathes in us.

One: Trees stand around us alike ancestors.

Many: Birds sing to us like friends.

One: Rivers flow with tears of joy.

Many: Living beings feed us and walk with us.

One: In the end the earth receives us.

**Many: All Creation is God's love poured out; we receive it with joy, care
for it with gratitude,
and in unity with all Creation we celebrate. Alleluia!**

*** Hymn**

Ladybug

Don't disturb the ladybug, sleeping by the spider's web.
And if you see a butterfly, don't try to catch it in your net.
It's taken such a long, long time, to make this very special place
Open up your soul and mind to all it has to say.

Be still, take it in a while. Feel the sunshine warm upon your face.
You'll feel, when it makes you smile, That you're welcome to the human race.

Everybody sees the fire, of what this life can really be.
No one sees like you can see, when you let your mind flow free.
The wind is blowing through the trees, A song that everyone can learn.
And God is playing hide and seek, everywhere you turn.

Be still, take it in a while. Feel the sunshine warm upon your face.
You'll feel, when it makes you smile, That you're welcome to the human race.

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Hoeger

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Hoeger

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 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.

music and lyrics by David Lohman ©2007 Lohman Music Permission granted for congregational use

The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest
Book by Lynne Cherry, Music by Paul Boyd-Batstone, Ph.D

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Great Kapok Tree | 8. Oxygen |
| 2. Don’t Chop it Down | 9. Tomorrow Depends on Today |
| 3. They Depend on Me | 10. Feast Your Eyes |
| 4. The Way of Man | 11. New Eyes |
| 5. They Set Fire | 12. The Great Kapok Tree |
| 6. Many Ruined Lives | (reprise) |
| 7. My Dinner | |

See Pages 8 & 9

The children are invited to head to Ramsay Dining Room for snacks and celebrations.

Scripture

I Peter 1:22-23 Paul Boyd-Batstone, Ph.D
Common English Bible

As you set yourselves apart by your obedience to the truth so that you might have genuine affection for your fellow believers, love each other deeply and earnestly. Do this because you have been given new birth—not from the type of seed that decays but from seed that doesn’t. This seed is God’s life-giving and enduring word.

Contemporary Reading

Description of the Dr. Boyd-Batstone
Coast Live Oak, from the California Native Plant Society

The Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is an iconic, majestic tree that serves as a cornerstone for wildlife and the surrounding ecosystem. It is easily recognized by its gnarled branches and grand canopy. The Coast Live Oak flowers each spring and its acorns attract a wide variety of birds and butterflies - over 270 species rely on these trees for habitat and food.

With its rich green foliage and unique branching pattern, the Coast Live Oak is a favored choice for both residential and commercial landscapes. These resilient trees can live for centuries, often surpassing 250 years, and can grow impressively tall, reaching mature heights ranging from 30 to 80 feet.

It is one of the only California native oaks that thrives in coastal environments, it enjoys fog and mild winters. In the first year after planting, water once a week.

Then, reduce it to once a month until it reaches about 10 feet tall. After that, avoid watering directly during summer.

Propagation by acorns is relatively simple. Best acorns sink in water, have a more or less even mix of green, yellow and brown color, and pop out of their caps easily. Plant acorns on their sides, at depth of 1.5x its diameter. Keep moist until germinated and at least 3-4 weeks after the seedling pushes out of the ground. For propagating by seed: Fresh seeds sow in fall outdoors or stratify to hold for spring sowing.

Coast Live Oaks like to have their roots shaded. When they're young, surround them with mulch, rocks, or smaller native plants. Some California natives, such as Toyon and Manzanitas, do well as "understory" plants under the Coast Live Oak. Fallen oak leaves provide natural mulch for the tree. Don't fertilize oaks. They'll amend the soil over time with their own leaves and build the natural mycorrhizal fungus in the soil they need to thrive. Gradually, they become islands of natural fertility that improve the health of the nearby plants.

Reflection Living and Enduring Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

***Hymn** Earth is Full of Wit and Wisdom
See Page 9

Prayers of the People Rev. Hoeger

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 Dr. Boyd-Batstone

Offertory Spring Song (from "Album for the Young," Op. 68) Dr. Dickey
Robert Schumann

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firstchurchlb.org/donate
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. Hoeger

***Closing Hymn**

Genesis of Phytoplankton
See Page 10

***Benediction**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Postlude

Contra-Dance I (Allegro)
Ludwig van Beethoven

Dr. Dickey

Performers:

Arun Dasgupta-Tsinikas
Deven Dasgupta-
Tsinikas
Zoe Dasgupta-Tsinikas
Laurel Hoeger
Allie Hyman
Bethany Morales
Josephine Morales
Cori Beth O'Keefe
Liam O'Keefe

Juniper Stewart-Way
Imogen Stewart-Way
Grace Whitesell
Lauren Chambers
Penelope Carson

Led by:

Tracy Halter-Balin
Matt Balin
Richie Jones-
Muhammad
Fiona Foster

Musicians:

Curtis Heard, piano
Lisa Bode-Heard, vocals
Amanda Duncan,
percussion
Paul Boyd-Batstone,
ukuleles

Slides and Projector

Operator:

Doug Gissel

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

First Church has both assistive listening devices and noise-blocking headphones available to borrow for services. Please see one of the Diaconate, ushering in the entry to the church, to borrow one of these assists or to ask any other questions about available accommodations. Thank you!

The sanctuary flowers this morning are provided by Bob and Pat Kalayjian celebrating our family's April wedding anniversaries (Pat's parents and sister) and birthdays (Bob's mom and sister, our son Nick and our grandsons, Adam and Gus).

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: Trisha Pappas, Charlotte Waldo, Sam Kirk, David McMillin, Dale Whitney, Marion Hinze, Wayne Hester, Joanne Paine, and Aida Porteneuve.

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!

19 - Claude Berry	23 - Richard Landuyt, Melody O'Keefe, Dante Wilson
20 - Deb Buller, Jeff Ford	24 - Jeff McFarland
21 - Nathan Singh	
22 - Kimel Conway	

This Week at First Church

Sunday, April 19

8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom
9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Sanctuary
10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary and Youtube.com/1stChurch
Sunday School – Klar 1 & 3, Sacred Space and High School Room
11:15 AM Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Bell Room
11:30 AM Confirmation Class – Sr. High Room
Women's Group – Pownall Room
The Power of Libraries Forum – Koinonia Room
1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall
2:00 PM BOCA Concert: Barry Stees and Friends

Monday, April 20

10:00 AM Archives Group – Ramsay Dining Room
7:00 PM UCO Board Meeting – Zoom
BHPS Board Meeting – Pownall Room and Zoom

Tuesday, April 21

10:00 AM Sr. Coffee & Conversation – Koinonia Room
1:00 PM Library Team Meeting - Koinonia Room
7:00 PM Budget Committee Meeting – Zoom

Wednesday, April 22

6:00 PM Memorial Service for Laverne Joseph – Sanctuary & Patterson Hall

Thursday, April 23

5:00 PM Jubellance Rehearsal – Bell Room

DAYS Leaders LB – Klar 2 & 3

6:00 PM Bellissimo Rehearsal – Bell Room

7:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal - Choir Room

Friday, April 24

1:30 PM DAYS Grocery Program

Saturday, April 25

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

10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley

6:00 PM Queer Prom – Patterson Hall, Courtyard and Koinonia Room

Sunday, April 26

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 and Youtube.com/1stChurch

Sunday School – Klar 1 & 3, Sacred Space and High School Room

11:15 AM Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Bell Room

11:30 AM In-betweeners Small Group Meeting – Pownall Room

Newcomers Lunch – Koinonia Room

1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall



Order Your New First Church T-Shirt -- THIS WEEK ONLY!!!

If you don't have a First Church T-shirt and would like one, now is your chance!! Use the QR Code to place your order. Shirts are \$26 and available in black or white. All orders must be placed by NOON ON MONDAY 4/20!

Shirts will be distributed the Sunday before the Pride Parade! Measurements are available - contact Kirsten at kpickus@gmail.com with any questions!

Are you new to First Church? Join us for Lunch!

You are invited to a Newcomers Lunch Gathering on Sunday, April 26 at 11:30 AM in the Koinonia Room. We will share more during lunch about our congregation and our activities, about the wider United Church of Christ, and we will talk about what it means to be a member of our church. And, we will close with a historical tour of the church if you haven't been on one before! Please RSVP to office@firstchurchlb.org to help us have enough food for you!

If you can't attend that day and are interested in joining our church or learning more, please contact Rev. Petra to set up a conversation at another time that works for you. Then, for those who choose to join, new members will be welcomed during worship on Sunday, May 3. We look forward to sharing with you and getting to know you!

1. The Great Kapok Tree

In Brasil, the Great Kapok tree plants its roots in the understory.
In the understory,
the Great Kapok tree.

Like no other rain forest tree,
it reaches through the canopy.
Reaches through the canopy
like no other rain forest tree.

Then came a man
to chop down the tree.
What a sad, sad story.
What a sad, sad story
to chop down the Great
Kapok tree.

2. Don't Chop it Down

Don't Chop it Down ...
(repeat)

Senhor, this is,
this is a miracle.
This is a tree of miracles.
Senhor, this is
this is my home,
my only home
where generations of my
ancestors have lived.

3. They Depend on Me

All living things depend on
one another.
And even though I'm just a
little bee,
I pollinate the flowers and
each tree because, you see,
they depend on me.

Senhor, my hive is in this
kapok tree.
Senhor, I need this tree.
Senhor, I pollinate this very
tree.
Senhor, this tree needs me.

4. The Way of Man

Chop one tree come back for

another.

Chop two trees come back
for more.
Chop three trees come back
for another.
Senhor, this is the way of
man.

The roots ... will die ...
the rain will wash ...
the soil away.
The forest will become a
desert. (Repeat)

5. They Set Fire

Once you begin to chop down
the trees,
once you begin, Senhor.
Once you begin to chop down
the trees,
we've seen it all before.

They set fire to the
underbrush.
The land they begin to clear.
Once you begin to chop down
the trees,
soon the forest disappears.

They set fire to the
underbrush,
They set fire to the
underbrush,
They set fire to the
underbrush,
and the forest disappears.

Once you begin to chop down
the trees,
once you begin, Senhor.
Once you begin to chop down
the trees,
we've seen it all before.
Black and smoldering ruins
remain
on the forest floor.
Once you begin to chop
down the trees,
we've seen it all before.

6. Many Ruined Lives

Senhor, a ruined rain forest
means many ruined lives,
many ruined lives. (2X)
If you chop down this
kapok tree,
you'll ruin many lives.
You'll leave us without
homes,
many ruined lives.

7. My Dinner

In the dappled light and
shadows of the great kapok
tree,
my spotted coat blends in to
the understory.
But if you chop it down,
who will I surprise?
How will I find my dinner?
My dinner, my dinner,
please tell me how to find
my dinner.
My dinner, my dinner,
please tell me how to find
my dinner.
Senhor, the kapok tree is
the only home, you see,
to many birds and animals
and jaguars just like me.

But if you chop it down,
where will I search around?
Where will I find my dinner?

8. Oxygen

Senhor, do you know what
we need to live?
Oxygen, Oxygen
What do animals and
humans need to live?
Oxygen, Oxygen.
Oxygen, Oxygen
in order to live we need
Oxygen.
Oxygen, Oxygen
we need Oxygen to live.
Senhor, do you know what

trees produce,
 Oxygen, Oxygen.
 What do trees produce can
 you deduce?
 Oxygen, Oxygen.
 If you cut down the rain
 forest,
 Oxygen, Oxygen.
 Would n't you destroy what
 trees give us?
 Oxygen, Oxygen.

9. Tomorrow Depends on Today

With no thought for the future,
 you're chopping down this tree.

And surely you know:
 what happens tomorrow depends on you and me.
 What happens today ...
 makes the way for tomorrow.

Tomorrow depends on today.
 The big man tells you to chop down,

to chop down a beautiful tree.
 He doesn't think of his own children.
 He doesn't think of you or me.
 When you chop down the future,
 along with this kapok tree,
 you create a world for your children,
 a world with any trees.

10. Feast Your Eyes

What would you do without beauty?
 How much is beauty worth?
 If you destroy all this beauty,
 where would you

find it on earth?
 Feast your eyes ... (3X)

11. New Eyes

A child from the Yanomamo clan
 knelt over the sleeping man.
 He murmured into his ears
 and said to the man's surprise:
 When you wake up, please
 look upon us with new eyes.
 (2X)

New eyes, new eyes.
 When you wake up, please
 look upon us with new eyes.

12. The Great Kapok Tree (Reprise)

Then the man began to see.
 And left his ax at the foot of
 the kapok tree.
 At the foot of the kapok
 tree, the man began to see.



A FUSION OF MUSIC & ART
with Barry Stees & Friends

INCLUDING, THE VIDEO "SHAPING REALITY" BY MELINDA STEES
 PREMIERING "WEAVING" BY CURTIS HEARD

19 APRIL, 2026 · 02:00 PM
 FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LONG BEACH
 241 CEDAR AVE, LONG BEACH, 90802


FREE WILL OFFERING ACCEPTED

The Power of Libraries

A forum in celebration of National Library Week

Featuring a panel of local librarians discussing censorship, the evolution of libraries, library resources, and more.

April 19, 2026
 11:30AM
 Koinonia Room



Former Long Beach Public Librarian, Blanche Collins successfully defended a 1962 challenge to the novel *The Last Temptation of Christ* by Nikos Kazantzakis. Learn more about Blanche at the forum.
 Illustration by Rhyann Humphrey, FCCLB Office Manager

THE LIBRARY AT
 First Congregational Church
 of Long Beach
 241 Cedar Avenue, Long Beach

Support
 Journals
 Access
 Preservation
 Learning
 Engagement
 Community
 Technology
 Books
 Knowledge

EARTH IS FULL OF WIT AND WISDOM

Adam M. L. Tice

HOLY MANNA
William Moore, fl. 1830



1. Earth is full of wit and wis - dom,
2. Earth is full of wit and wis - dom,
3. Earth is full of wit and wis - dom:



sound - ing God's de - light - ed laugh, from the ti - ny
wo - ven in - to har - mo - ny. Ev - 'ry crea - ture
pen - guin, plat - y - pus, and snail, cac - tus, sea slug,



ro - ly - po - ly to the tree - top - tall gi - raffe.
has a pur - pose, ev - 'ry flow'r and bum - ble - bee.
oak, and al - gae, from the mi - crobe to the whale.



All cre - a - tion sings in won - der; e - ven
Spi - der, hu - man, red - wood, geck - o, mon - key,
In this great and strange cre - a - tion, with a



rocks and trees re - jice as they join the
chick - en, mouse, and snake, live with - in a
breath God gives us birth: born of soil to



ring - ing cho - rus: ech - oes of our Mak - er's voice.
sin - gle fab - ric: cloth that on - ly God could make.
live as stew - ards, called to love and serve the earth.

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GENESIS OF PHYTOPLANKTON

Hannah C. Brown

BEECHER
John Zundel, 1815-1882



1. Gen - e - sis of phy - to - plank - ton,
2. Sculp - tor form - ing clay and feld - spar,
3. Weav - er craft - ing e - co - sys - tems,
4. Love com - pos - ing all cre - a - tion



fid - dle fern and ging - ko tree, bris - tle - mouth and
lime - stone cave and moun - tain slate, de - sert sands and
arc - tic tun - dra, prai - rie sedge, broad - leaf shade and
in our queer, com - plex ar - ray, plac - ing at the



long - horn bee - tle, bub - ble snail and ma - son bee;
tid - al wet - lands, for - est floor and seis - mic plate;
sun - lit can - yon, deep - est sea and wa - ter's edge;
heart of na - ture var - i - a - tion, change, and play;



Source of end - less al - ter - a - tion,
Pow - er wield - ing wind and wa - ter,
Ax - is spin - ning earth and sea - sons,
Dream - er teach - ing plant and crea - ture



ba - sal flow'r and fin - ch's beak: we meet you in
breeze and cur - rent, mist and squall: we meet you in
cy - cles of pre - cise de - sign: we meet you in
how to har - mo - nize in key: we meet you as



ev - 'ry spe - cies, each e - volv - ing and u - nique.
cease - less mo - tion as you move and mold us all.
place and pat - tern as your el - e - ments com - bine.
one of man - y in your glo - rious sym - pho - ny.



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Charlotte Waldo, Vice Moderator
Julie Gholson, Treasurer
Kirsten Pickus, Secretary

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Elena Legeros

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Julie Ford & Tim Mountain

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Parish Life:

Alison Mitchell & Don Donan

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Jenn Tafel

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Curtis Heard

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Melody O'Keefe & Heather Chambers at
Privity CPA Partners, LP

CLERGY

Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg, Senior
Minister

pmsternberg@firstchurchlb.org

Rev. Wally Hoeger, Associate Minister

whoeger@firstchurchlb.org

MUSIC STAFF

Curtis Heard, Director of Music

Tracy Halter-Balin, Associate Director of
Music

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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Sunday School

Oscar Ramirez, Elijah Brown, Joel

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CLERGY IN OUR COMMUNITY

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Emeritus

Rev. Katy Hyman, Director of Pediatric
and Adult Palliative Care, MemorialCare