



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JULY 26, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

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.

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

Prelude

Trumpet Tune
Andrew Carter

Dr. Marc Dickey

Invocation

The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

***Call to Celebration**

The Rev. Wally Hoeger and Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

One: O Creator of the Cosmos, you know what the kin-dom of God is like,
but also remember what it was like before.

**Many: Before creation and kin-doms, before mustard seeds and fine
pearls, before yeast and bakers to make bread.**

One: You know what it is like to long for these things, to imagine them into
being, and it is from this longing for your kin-dom and for your love that
we enter our worship.

**Many: Come, let us praise and pray in the presence of the still-creating
holy promise.**

One: Let us rejoice in the Good News of Love together— come, let us
celebrate!

***Processional Hymn, No. 565** God Whose Giving Knows No Ending
See Pages 8 & 9

Welcome and Announcements

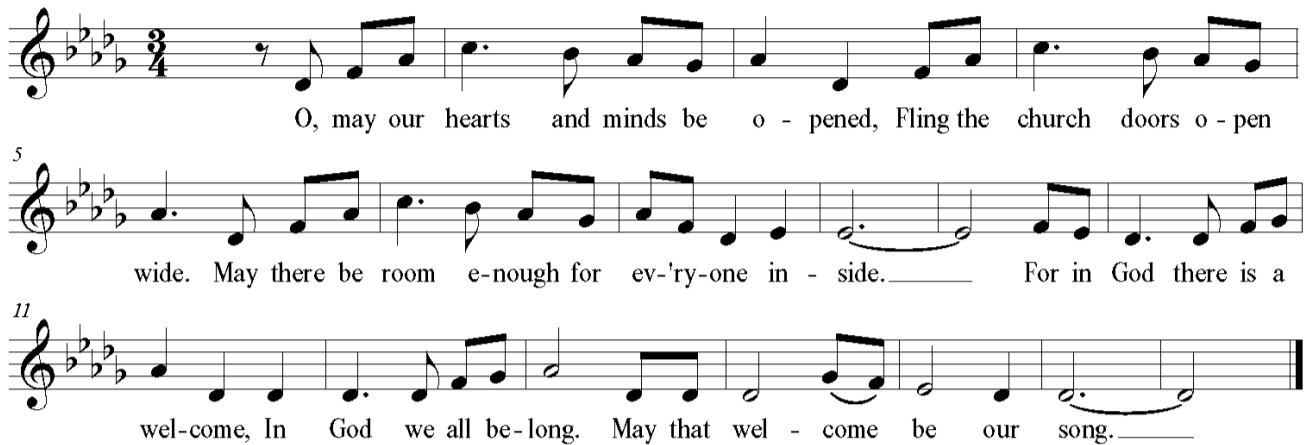
Rev. Hoeger

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Hoeger

Welcome Song

The children are invited to come forward during this song.



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

Time With Children

Rev. Hoeger

Anthem

The Lone Wild Bird
Southern folk hymn, arr. by Frank DeWald

Sanctuary Choir

The children are invited to Funday Sunday activities in Ramsay Dining Room

Scripture

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
New Revised Standard Version, adapted

Dr. Randy King

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Contemporary Reading

Excerpt from
“The Hope I’ve Arrived At”
By Debie Thomas

Dr. Randy King

Who knows, in the cosmic scheme of things, how our tiny acts of resilience, kindness, reconciliation, and reverence will ricochet across the years or generations? Who knows what guises resurrection might yet take? What else is Christianity if not an astonishing commitment to the tiny, the improbable, the fragile, the broken? A mustard seed. A bit of yeast. An alabaster jar. A crucified carpenter.

In her beautiful short piece “a blessing for the lives we didn’t choose,” Kate Bowler asks God to meet us in “the after,” in the place where we never expected to arrive. This is not a place I ever expected to inhabit as a parent when my children were born. But here, too, God is with me and with my children. And so I am learning to pray with Bowler: “Show us a glimmer of possibility in this new constraint, that small truths will be given back to us. We are held. We are safe. We are loved.”

Special Music

Journey to the Past
by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

Jade Dodgen, soloist

Hymn, No. 471

What a Covenant
See Page 7

Prayers of the People

Rev. Hoeger

**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. Randy King

Offertory

La Tromba
François Couperin

Dr. Dickey

*Scan for our secure online donation site
or go to firstchurchlb.org/donate*



***Doxology:** Old Hundredth (Hymn No. 780)

**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

***Recessional Hymn, No. 76**

Sent Forth By God's Blessing
See Pages 10 & 11

Postlude

Rondeau
Joseph Mouret

Dr. Dickey

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 Don Donan and Tom Larson, who were married here in the Sanctuary yesterday. We make this dedication, both in honor and in memory, to our families.

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: Tom Larson and Don Donan who were married here yesterday, Eric Dickey, Jorge Rocha (brother-in-law of Jose de Sanchez), Adreana Langston, Laura McCrary, David McMillin, Dale Whitney, Marion Hinze, Wayne Hester, Joanne Paine, and Aida Porteneuve.

Birthdays This Week – Happy Birthday!

27 - Matt Balin
28 - John Kness
30 - Gayle Connell, Eve Handen, Peter Wright
31 - Katy Hyman
01 - Lisa Bode Heard, Joshua Tann

This Week at First Church

Sunday, July 26

8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room
9:30 AM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & [YouTube.com/1stchurch](https://www.youtube.com/1stchurch)
Funday Sunday
11:30 AM Inbetweeners Small Group Meeting – Pownall Room
Social Justice Forum – Koinonia Room

Monday, July 27

10:00 AM Archives Group – Sr. High Room

Tuesday, July 28

10:00 AM Handmakers Small Group – Koinonia Room

7:00 PM Church Council Meeting – Zoom

Wednesday, July 29

7:00 PM Diaconate Meeting – Zoom

Thursday, July 30

5:00 PM DAYS Leaders LB – Ramsay Dining Room

Friday, July 31

1:30 PM DAYS Grocery Program – Patterson Hall and Potholder lot

Saturday, August 1

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

10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley

5:00 PM Potluck Game Night – Patterson Hall

Sunday, August 2

8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room

10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & YouTube.com/1stchurch
Funday Sunday

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



REUNITING FAMILIES

Freeing our Immigrant Neighbors from Detention

The Summer Social Justice Forum for July

*The Work of the **CLUE**
Bond Fund, with
speaker Jennifer Coria*

Sunday, July 26

11:30 AM • Koinonia Room
241 Cedar Ave, Long Beach,
CA, 90802



Use the QR Code
above to join via Zoom



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Church Presents...

Potluck & Game Night

Intergenerational fellowship and fun with game options for all ages, kicked off with a potluck supper.

Date: Saturday, August 1st
Time: 5-8 PM
Place: Patterson Hall

To sign up, please visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/FirstChurchPotluck>

What a Covenant

*Deut. 33:27**Elisha A. Hoffman, 1887; alt.*

1 What a *cov - e - nant, what a joy di - vine, lean - ing on the ev - er -
 2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil - grim way, lean - ing on the ev - er -
 3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean - ing on the ev - er -

last - ing arms. What a bless - ed - ness, what a peace is mine, lean - ing
 last - ing arms. Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, lean - ing
 last - ing arms? I have bless - ed peace with my Sav - ior near, lean - ing

Refrain

on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
 on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se - cure from
 on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

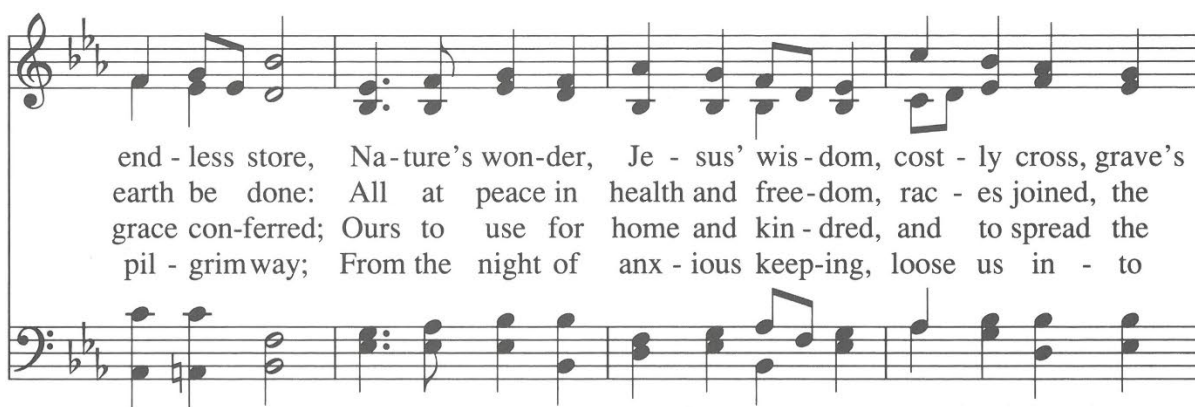
all a - larms; lean - ing, lean - ing, lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

565

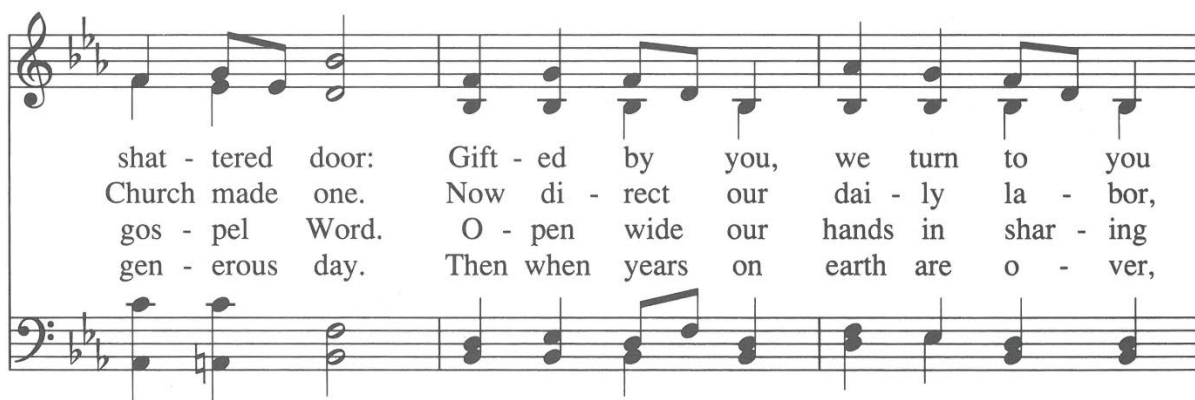
God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

Robert L. Edwards, 1961; alt.


1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and
 2 Skills and time are ours for serv - ing, that your will on
 3 Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through powers your
 4 Lend your joy to all our giv - ing, let it light our



end - less store, Na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's
 earth be done: All at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the
 grace con - ferred; Ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the
 pil - grim way; From the night of anx - ious keep - ing, loose us in - to



shat - tered door: Gift - ed by you, we turn to you
 Church made one. Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor,
 gos - pel Word. O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing
 gen - erous day. Then when years on earth are o - ver,



of - fer - ing up our - selves in praise; Thank - ful song shall
 lest we strive for self a - lone; born with tal - ents,
 as we heed Christ's age - less call, Heal - ing, teach - ing,
 and we've lived our hu - man span, God, ful - fill be -



JOIN US FOR THE

FIRST CHURCH

ANNUAL PICNIC

Spend a fabulous afternoon with your First Church Family and Friends!



SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

AFTER CHURCH UNTIL 1:15PM

Chavez Community Center
and Amphitheater



- Indoor Seating available or bring chairs and blankets to sit outside.
- Hamburgers & Hotdogs with vegetarian options
- Enter your brownies in the Great First Church Brownie Bake Off



Use the QR code above to sign up

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Omer Westendorf, 1964

Descant



2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

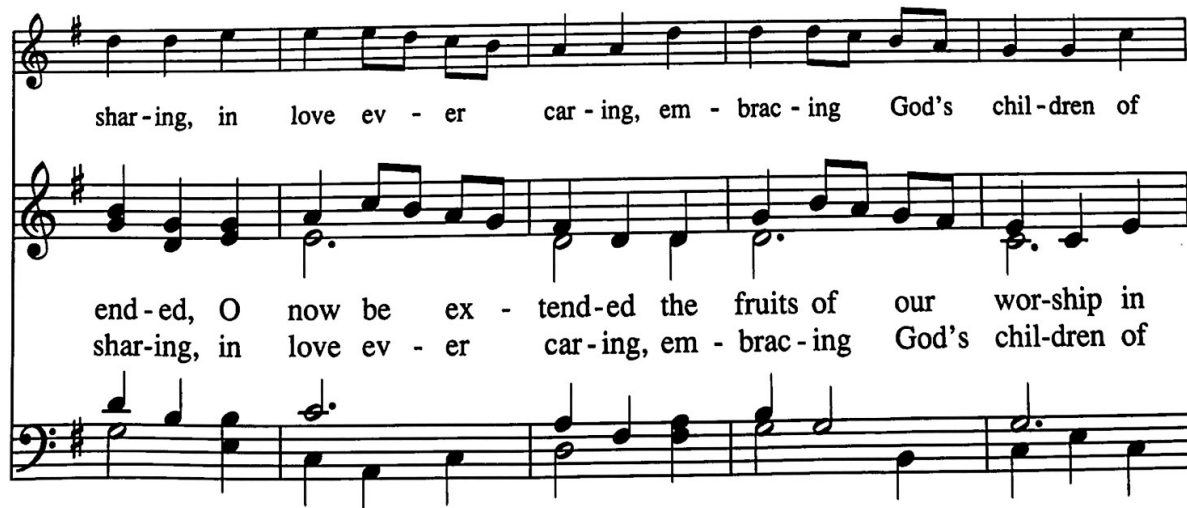
Unison

1 Sent forth by God's bless-ing, our true faith con - fess - ing, the
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the



tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

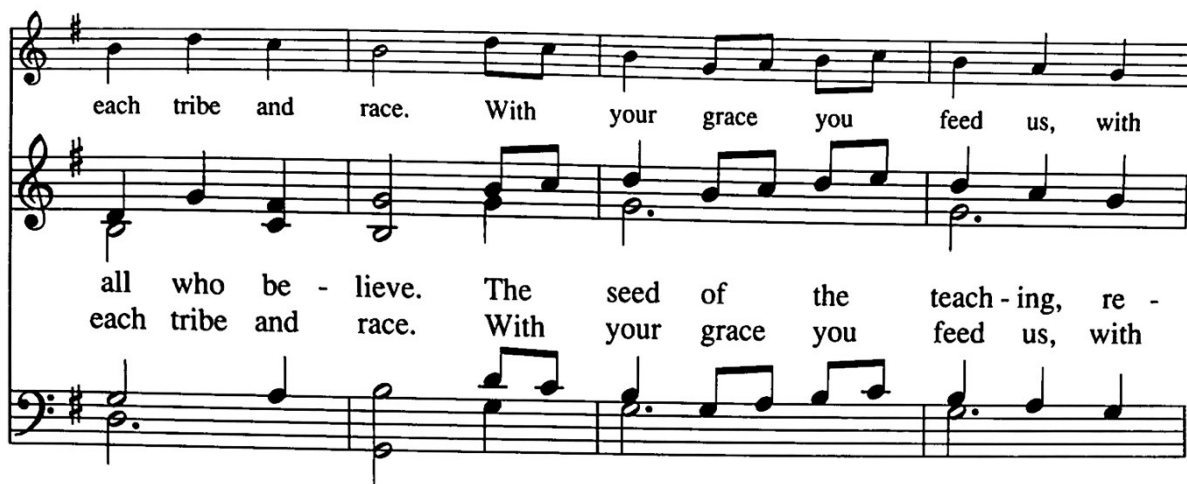
peo - ple of God from this dwell-ing take leave. The ser - vice is
tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er



shar-ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil-dren of

end-ed, O now be ex - tend-ed the fruits of our wor-ship in
shar-ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil-dren of

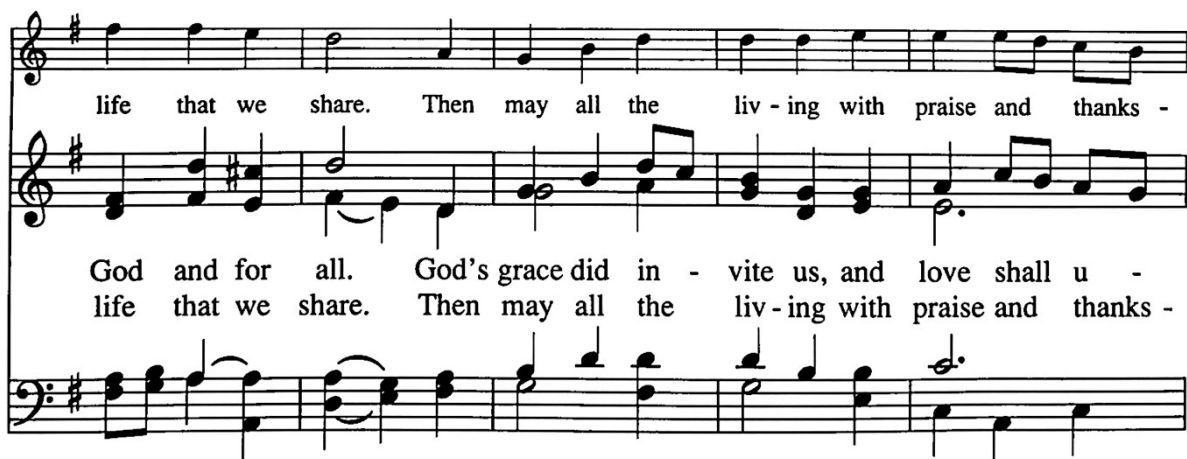
CLOSE OF WORSHIP



each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with
all who be - lieve. The seed of the teach - ing, re -
each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with



your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this
cep - tive hearts reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for
your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this



life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -
God and for all. God's grace did in - vite us, and love shall u -
life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -



giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.
nite us to work for God's realm and to an - swer the call.
giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHURCH OFFICERS

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

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Pam Chapin, Dorothy King

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Elena Legeros

Cultural Arts:

Julie Ford & Tim Mountain

Diaconate:

Harold Sutherland & Bill Peck

Parish Life:

Alison Mitchell & Don Donan

Social Justice and Outreach:

Jenn Tafel

Stewardship & Finance:

Jane Hansen & Randy King

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Cathy Chambers, Heather Chambers &
Sebastian Jobin-Reyes

COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

Curtis Heard

POET-IN-RESIDENCE

Tina Datsko de Sánchez

HISTORIAN

Bob Kalayjian

BOOKKEEPERS

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

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Tracy Halter-Balin, Director of Christian
Ed.

Eric Peterson, Business Manager

Rhyan Humphrey, Office Manager

Preston Andres, Lead Custodian

Mattea Fisher, **Yesi Urrea Castro**,
Sebastian Lytwynec, **Mercy Torres**,
Sunday School

Oscar Ramirez, **Elijah Brown**, **Joel**

Gantt, **Cassie Jordan**, Custodians

Julianne Fung, Audio Technician

Abby Zidonis, Video Technician

CLERGY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Rev. Jerry Stinson, Senior Minister
Emeritus

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