



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUGUST 16, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

TWELFTH 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

Aria
Flor Peeters

Dr. Marc Dickey

Invocation

The Rev. Wally Hoeger

***Call to Celebration**

Rev. Hoeger and The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

One: Here we can come together,
people searching for healing and hope:

**Many: Here we are met by the One
who would bless us with abundant life.**

One: Here we are called to gather
as the family of God:

**Many: We may find those who are strangers,
yet are beloved siblings of ours.**

One: Here we discover the truth that God
makes no distinctions among us:

**Many: Here we are welcomed and embraced
by the One whose arms are open to all.**

***Opening Hymn, No. 286 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness**
Pages 7 & 8

Welcome and Announcements

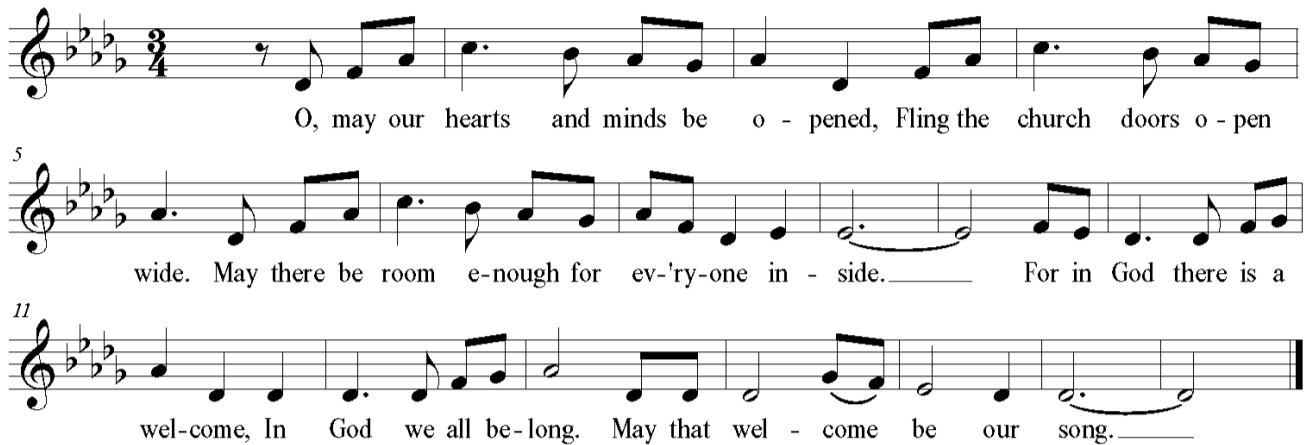
Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Welcome Song

The children are invited to come forward during this song.



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

Time With Children

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Special Music

Stand By You
Rachel Platten

Sarah Shimanek, vocalist
Curtis Heard, piano

The children are invited to Funday Sunday activity in the Courtyard.

Scripture

Matthew 15:21-28
The Inclusive Bible

Martha Duncan

Jesus left there and departed for the district of Tyre and Sidon. It happened that a Canaanite woman living in that area came and cried out to Jesus, "Heir to the House of David, have pity on me! My daughter is horribly demonpossessed."

Jesus gave her no word of response. The disciples came up and repeatedly said to him, "Please get rid of her! She keeps calling after us."

Finally Jesus turned to the woman and said, "My mission is only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

She then prostrated herself before him with the plea, "Help me, Rabbi!"

He answered, "But it isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

"True, Rabbi," she replied, "but even the dogs get to eat the scraps that fall from the table."

Jesus then said in reply, "Woman, you have great faith! Your wish will come to pass." At that very moment her daughter was healed.

Contemporary Reading

Stubborn Blessing
Jan Richardson

Martha Duncan

Don't tell me no.
I have seen you
feed the thousands,
seen miracles spill
from your hands
like water, like wine,
seen you with circles
and circles of crowds
pressed around you
and not one soul
turned away.

Don't start with me.

I am saying
you can close the door
but I will keep knocking.
You can go silent
but I will keep shouting.
You can tighten the circle
but I will trace a bigger one
around you,

around the life of my child
who will tell you
no one surpasses a mother
for stubbornness.

I am saying
I know what you
can do with crumbs
and I am claiming mine,
every morsel and scrap
you have up your sleeve.
Unclench your hand,
your heart.
Let the scraps fall
like manna,
like mercy
for the life
of my child,
the life of
the world.

Don't you tell me no.

Sermon

Mistakes

Rev. Hoeger

*Hymn

She Came to Jesus
SLANE 10.10.9.10 ("Be Thou My Vision")

She came to Jesus from outside the fold —
Canaanite woman! Persistent and bold!
Looking to Jesus, she wanted to see
One who would help her and set her child free.

Claiming a blessing, a touch of God's grace,
She knew God's love was not bounded by place.
Jesus, you listened, debated — then healed —
For in her asking, her faith was revealed.

God, you still bless those who seek you in prayer.
You welcome dreamers who faithfully dare.
In Christ, now risen, your mercy extends:
Those on the outside are welcomed as friends.

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Prayers of the People
Our Common Prayer

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

**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

Martha Duncan

Offertory

Offrande
Flor Peeters

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. Malleis-Sternberg

***Closing Hymn, No. 16** Let Us with a Joyful Mind

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***Benediction**

Rev. Hoeger

Postlude

Toccata
Flor Peeters

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 Carol Van Alsten "in honor of my wonderful sisters, Jane and Mary Ann."

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: Bill Kuehl, Carmen Abbott, Cynde Soto, 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!

18 - Daphne Marquez, David
Cervantes

19 - Owen Gardner-Orr

20 - Rob Daniel, Eli Hedgpeth

21 - Susan Dampf Stanton

22 - Melinda Stees

This Week at First Church

Sunday, August 16

- 8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
Funday Sunday – Courtyard
- 11:30 AM Church Picnic – Cesar Chavez Park, 401 Golden Ave. – Rides from church available
- 1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall

Monday, August 17

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

Tuesday, August 18

- 1:00 PM Library Team Meeting – Koinonia Room
- 7:00 PM Budget Committee Meeting – Zoom

Wednesday, August 19

- 4:00 PM Bay Day

Thursday, August 20

- 5:00 PM BOCA – Hollywood Bowl Concert
DAYS Leaders LB – Ramsay Dining Room

Friday, August 21

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

Saturday, August 22

- 9:30 AM Golf Group
- 10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley
- 6:30 PM Landmark Summer Gala - Courtyard

Sunday, August 23

- 8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
Blessing of the Backpacks – Sanctuary
Funday Sunday – Ramsay Dining Room
- 11:30 AM CE Teacher Training – Ramsay Dining Room
- 1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall

Joining First Church as a Member

By Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

We celebrate that we continue to welcome newcomers to our church, and the ministers and leaders of our church are happy to set a time to meet with you to talk further if you are interested in learning about church membership. Our next official Newcomers Luncheon will be on Sunday, November 15 at 11:45 am, but if you'd like to join as a member sooner we are happy to meet, please contact Rev. Petra or the Church Office to request a time.

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

Unison, brightly
Refrain

James K. Manley, 1978; alt.

Chords: D G A Dsus4 D

Spir - it, spir - it of gen - tle-ness, blow through the

Chords: Bm E7 Asus7 A7

wil - der-ness, call - ing and free,

Chords: D G A Dsus4 D

Spir - it, spir - it of rest - less-ness, stir me from

Chords: Bm G A7 D G D

plac - id-ness, wind, wind on the sea.

Last time, end

Chords: D G A G

1 You moved on the wa - ters, you called to the
 2 You swept through the des - ert, you stung with the
 3 You sang in a sta - ble, you cried from a
 4 You call from to - mor - row, you break an - cient

D A7 D Bm

deep, then you coaxed up the moun - tains from the
 sand, and you goad - ed your peo - ple with a
 hill, then you whis-pered in si - lence when the
 schemes, from the bond - age of sor - row the

E7 Asus7 A7 D G A

val - leys of sleep; And o - ver the e - ons you
 law and a land; When they were con-found - ed by their
 whole world was still; And down in the cit - y you
 cap - tives dream dreams; Our wom-en see vi - sions, our

G D A7 D Bm

called to each thing, "A - wake from your slum -
 i - dols and lies, then you spoke through your proph -
 called once a - gain, when you blew through your peo -
 men clear their eyes. With bold new de - ci -

G A7 D G D A7 *to Refrain*

bers and rise on your wings."
 ets to o - pen their eyes.
 ple on the rush of the wind.
 sions your peo-ple a - rise.

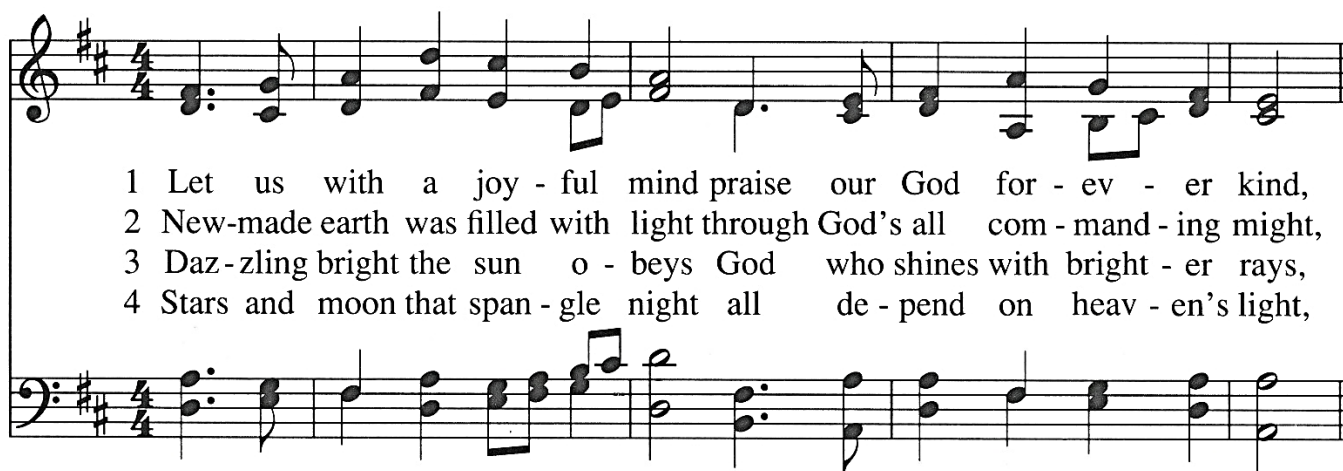
Let Us with a Joyful Mind

16

John Milton, 1624

Ps. 136

Adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1993



1 Let us with a joy - ful mind praise our God for - ev - er kind,
2 New-made earth was filled with light through God's all com - mand - ing might,
3 Daz - zling bright the sun o - beys God who shines with bright - er rays,
4 Stars and moon that span - gle night all de - pend on heav - en's light,

Refrain



Rich with mer - cies that en - dure, ev - er faith - ful, ev - er sure.

5 Crea-tures of the sea and land
all are fed by God's own hand,
Rich with mer-cies that en-dure,
ev-er faith-ful, ev-er sure.

6 There-fore with a joy-ful mind,
praise our God for-ev-er kind,
Rich with mer-cies that en-dure
ev-er faith-ful, ev-er sure.

As a youth of fifteen, John Milton composed a lengthy, elaborate paraphrase of Psalm 136 from which these lines have been selected. Milton, an English Puritan and Congregationalist, is best known for Paradise Lost.

Tune: INNOCENTS 7.7.7.7.
The Parish Choir, 1850

Landmark

THEATRE FROM THE ♥ OF LONG BEACH

THE SONGS THAT BUILT US

A SUMMER GALA

*A Night of Music and
Memories Under the Stars*



THE SONGS
that shaped us.

THE COMMUNITY
we create.

THE FUTURE
we build together.



Saturday, August 22 • 7pm

First Congregational Church of Long Beach



Long Beach

CROP WALK

**Ending Hunger One
Step at a Time!**

**SUNDAY
SEPT. 27**

11:45AM – REGISTRATION

12:15PM – PEP RALLY

12:30 PM – WALK BEGINS!

**REGISTER AS AN
INDIVIDUAL OR
A TEAM USING
THE QR CODE**



*Raise funds to help end
hunger and poverty in our
community and around
the world.*

FIRSTCHURCHLB.ORG/CROP



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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Building, Historic Preservation & Safety:
Pam Chapin, Dorothy King
Christian Education:
Elena Legeros
Cultural Arts:
Julie Ford & Tim Mountain
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Harold Sutherland & Bill Peck
Parish Life:
Alison Mitchell & Don Donan
Social Justice and Outreach:
Jenn Tafel
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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
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