



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.
SEASON OF CREATION: FOREST SUNDAY

***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

Fanfare for the Common Man
Aaron Copland

Dr. Marc Dickey

Invocation

The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

***Call to Celebration**

The Rev. Katy Hyman
from Standing by Words, by Wendell Berry

One: It may be that when we no longer know what to do

Many: we have come to our real work.

One: and that when we no longer know which way to go

Many: we have come to our real journey.

One: The mind that is not baffled is not employed.

Many: The impeded stream is the one that sings.

***Opening Hymn, No. 569**

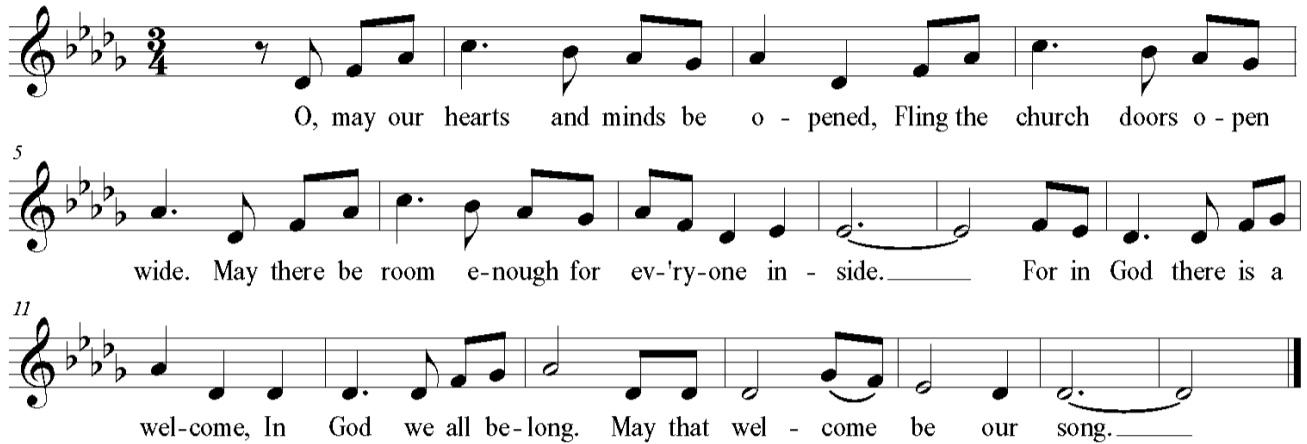
Touch the Earth Lightly
(see pg. 8)

Welcome and Announcements
Passing of the Peace

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg
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. Hyman and Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

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

Special Music

Adagio from Sonata "Pathetique"
Beethoven

Eddie Nazarro, piano

Scripture

Psalm 148
Common English Bible, adapted

Dr. Robert Kalayjian

Alleluia!
Praise the Lord from heaven!
Praise God on the heights!
Praise God, all of you who are
God's messengers!
Praise God, all of you who
comprise God's heavenly forces!
Sun and moon, praise God!
All of you bright stars, praise
God!

You highest heaven, praise God!
Do the same, you waters that are
above the sky!
Let all of these praise God's name
because God gave the command
and they were created!
God set them in place always and
forever. God made a law that will
not be broken.
Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all you
 ocean depths!
 Do the same, fire and hail, snow
 and smoke,
 stormy wind that does what God
 says!
 Do the same, you mountains,
 every single hill,
 fruit trees, and every single
 cedar!
 Do the same, you animals—wild or
 tame—
 you creatures that creep along
 and you birds that fly!
 Do the same, you rulers of the
 earth and every single person,
 you leaders of every nation on
 earth!

Do the same, you young men—
 and young women too—
 you who are old together with you
 who are young!
 Let all of these praise the Lord's
 name because only God's name is
 high over all.
 Only God's majesty is over earth
 and heaven.
 God raised the strength of God's
 people,
 the praise of all God's faithful
 ones—
 that's the Israelites,
 the people who are close to God.
 Alleluia!

Contemporary Reading

VII
For John Haines
 By Wendell Berry

Dr. Robert Kalayjian

There is a place you can go
 where you are quiet,
 a place of water and the light

on the water. Trees are there,
 leaves, and the light
 on leaves moved by air.

Birds, singing, move
 among leaves, in leaf shadow.
 After many years you have come

to no thought of these,

but they are themselves
 your thoughts. There seems to be

little to say, less and less.
 Here they are. Here you are.
 Here as though gone.

None of us stays, but in the hush
 where each leaf in the speech
 of leaves is a sufficient syllable

the passing light finds out
 surpassing freedom of its way.

Sermon Conversation

Ask Us Anything!
 Rev. Malleis-Sternberg and Rev. Hyman

Prayers of the People

Rev. Hyman

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. Robert Kalayjian

Offertory

Pastoral Dance on "Simple Gifts"
Andrew Clarke

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. Hyman

***Hymn**

You Grow Like the Moss
(see pg. 9)

Celebration of Communion

Invitation, Words of Institution and Communion Prayer

Rev. Hyman and Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

All are welcome to share in communion by coming forward, or let an usher know and we will come to you. The bread is gluten free and the cup contains grape juice.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all your children so that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ, Love Incarnate. Amen.

***Closing Hymn, No. 8** Praise to the Living God
(see pg. 10)

***Benediction**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

Postlude

Prelude I
George Gershwin

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 given by Alison and Jerry Mitchell in celebration of their 34th wedding anniversary.

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: Pam Chapin, Nicole O'Keefe, Bill Peck and Jeff Ford, Cynde Soto, Ellie Keller (niece of Ruth Keller), Michael and Amber, Bill Kuehl, 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!

9 - Doug Gissel 10 - Joan Stiehl, Marc Dickey, Meara Dobson, Don Donan
 12 - Karl Ackermann, Leslie Charles, Ben Bond

This Week at First Church

Sunday, September 6

8:45 AM Sunday Study – Pownall Room & Zoom
10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
 Funday Sunday – Ramsay Dining Room
11:30 AM Board of Christian Education Meeting – Sr. High Room
 Board of Cultural Arts Meeting – Pownall Room & Zoom
 Board of Parish Life Meeting – Booth Chapel
 Board of Social Justice and Outreach Meeting – Klar 3 and Zoom
 Board of Stewardship and Finance Meeting – Klar 2
1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall

Monday, September 7

Church is closed for Labor Day Holiday

Tuesday, September 8

10:00 AM Handmakers Small Group – Koinonia Room
6:00 PM Book Group – offsite in a member's home

Thursday, September 10

5:00 PM DAYS Leaders LB – Ramsay Dining Room
5:00 PM Jubellance Bell Choir – Bell Room
6:00 PM Bellissimo Bell Choir – Bell Room
7:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Friday, September 11

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

Saturday, September 12

9:30 AM Golf Group – Off-site at a local golf course
10:00 PM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley

Sunday, September 13 – Homecoming Sunday

8:45 AM Sunday Study – Pownall Room & Zoom
9:00 AM Homecoming Breakfast – Patterson Hall
10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
 Sunday School – Klar 1 & 3, Sacred Space & High School Room
11:30 AM Refreshments from BOCA and Activity Info – Koinonia Room
 Youth and Parents Meeting – Ramsay Dining Room
12:30 PM – Recital from Dr. Marc Dickey and Friends – Sanctuary
1:30 PM – Reception – Koinonia Room
1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center – Patterson Hall



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 (UCC)
 and its Board of Cultural Arts present

Farewell Finale *with Fireworks!* *(the musical kind)*

**featuring Dr. Marc Dickey at the Mighty
Möller Concert Pipe Organ**



with guest artists:
Megan O'Toole, soprano
Barry Stees, bassoon
Three Drummers Drumming

Sunday, Sept. 13, 12:30 pm

First Congregational Church of Long Beach
 241 Cedar Ave, Long Beach, CA, 90802

Free will offering accepted

Free street parking

Touch the Earth Lightly

Unison
Brightly

Shirley Erena Murray, 1992

1 Touch the earth light - ly, use the earth gent - ly,
 * 2 We who en - dan - ger, who cre - ate hun - ger,
 3 Let there be green - ing, birth from the burn - ing,
 4 God of all liv - ing, God of all lov - ing,

*The second verse only may be sung in A minor, omitting the sharps except where indicated in parentheses.

nour-ish the life of the world in our care:
 a - gents of death for all crea - tures that live,
 wa - ter that bless - es, and air that is sweet,
 God of the seed - ling, the snow, and the sun,

Gift of great won - der, ours to sur - ren - der,
 We who would fos - ter clouds of dis - as - ter—
 Health in God's gar - den, hope in God's chil - dren,
 Teach us, de - flect us, Christ re - con - nect us,

trust for the chil - dren to - mor - row will bear.
 God of our plan - et, fore - stall and for - give!
 re - gen - er - a - tion that peace will com - plete.
 us - ing us gent - ly, and mak - ing us one.

Shirley Erena Murray's notes on this hymn state that the title line is borrowed from an Australian Aboriginal saying. The "clouds of disaster" mentioned in stanza 2 refer to nuclear testing by France, which New Zealand has protested at the United Nations many times.

Tune: TENDERNESS 5.5.10.D.
 Colin Gibson, 1992

YOU GROW LIKE THE MOSS

SAMANTHRA (ZION'S PILGRIM)
Supplement to the Kentucky Harmony,
Second Edition, 1822

Hannah C. Brown

Arr. Austin C. Lovelace, 1919–2010; 1986, alt.



1. You grow like the moss drap-ing soft, sod-den
 2. You move like the moun-tains that rise by the
 3. You flow like the o-cean as un-hur-ried

logs and car-pet-ing ground, thick and green;
 inch when ridg-es of rock meet and fold;
 tides re-lent-less-ly pull and re-lease;

you spread like the strands from the roots as they
 you sof-ten like stone worn by wa-ter and
 you fall like the rain-drops that stream and sub-

crawl to weave a dense web-bing un-seen. God,
 wind re-veal-ing new forms from the old. God,
 side as life-bear-ing riv-ers in-crease. God,

teach us a slow-ness that nur-tures the soul, a
 teach us to trust in your arc as it curves, to
 rock us with rhy-thms that cra-dle and calm, re-

vi-brance that's sub-tle and strong; re-
 bend as we build towards the just; come
 frains that re-solve and re-peat; in-

wild us with Spir-it like sap in the bone; re-
 carve us till truth can be clear-ly ob-served, shape
 vite us to rest in the warmth of your arms, dis-

mind us to whom we be-long.
 con-tours of grace in your dust.
 solved in-to love so com-plete.

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Ps. 84:1-2

Curtis Beach, 1966; alt.

1 Praise to the liv - ing God, the God of love and light, Whose
 2 Praise to the liv - ing God, from whom all things de - rive, Whose
 3 Praise to the liv - ing God, who knows our joy and pain, Who
 4 Praise to the liv - ing God, a - round, with - in, a - bove, Be -

word brought forth the myr - iad suns and set the worlds in flight;
 Spir - it formed up - on this sphere the first faint seeds of life;
 shares with us our com - mon life, the sa - cred and pro - fane.
 yond the grasp of hu - man mind, but whom we know as love.

Whose in - fi - nite de - sign, which we but dim - ly see, Per -
 Who caused them to e - volve, un - wit - ting, toward God's goal, Till
 God toils wher-e'er we toil, in home and mart and mill; And
 In these tu - mul-tuous days, so full of hope and strife, May

vades all na - ture, mak - ing all a cos - mic u - ni - ty.
 hu - man-kind stood on the earth, as liv - ing, think - ing souls.
 deep with - in the hu - man heart God leads us for - ward still.
 we bear wit - ness to the Way, O Source and Goal of life.

Curtis Beach, born into a family of several generations of ministers, was educated at Harvard University, the Boston University School of Theology, and the University of Southern California. A minister in the United Church of Christ, Beach authored *The Gospel of Mark: Its Making and Meaning*.

Tune: DIADEMATA S.M.D.
 George J. Elvey, 1868



***Fall Fun for All & Apple Pie Day
October 9–11, 2026 | Pilgrim Pines Camp***

This fall, come join us up at The Pines for a weekend (or a day!) full of outdoor adventures, delicious food, meaningful connections, and plenty of fun for all ages. We'll explore the beauty of the season together through camp activities, worship, and time in nature, discovering that every person has a place in our community and every generation has something to offer.

Whether you're coming with family, friends, your church group, or just looking for a reason to get up the mountain, we'd love to have you!

Head to pilgrimpinescamp.org/fall-camp to register!



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

Christian Education:

Elena Legeros

Cultural Arts:

Julie Ford & Tim Mountain

Diaconate:

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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

Sophia Valenzuela, **Kyla Baker**, **Yesi**

Urrea Castro, **Sebastian Lytwynec**,

Mercy Segastume Castillo, 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