



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

RIVER SUNDAY
SEASON OF CREATION

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

Fantasia in G Major
(*Très vite, Gravement, Lentement*)
J. S. Bach

Dr. Marc Dickey

Acolytes: Imogen Stewart-Way

Invocation

The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

Introit

It Is Well With My Soul
Phillip Bliss

Jubellance

***Call to Celebration**

The Rev. Wally Hoeger

One: Come, People of God, let us gather by the river of life, bringing our whole selves.

Many: In our sorrow, in our joy, in our loneliness, even in our uncertainty and pain, the river offers new life, and hope.

One: Let us celebrate together, held in the everflowing love that is God's beautiful creation!

***Opening Hymn, No. 433** In the Bulb there is a Flower
See Page 7

Welcome and Announcements

Mission Moment

Banned Books Week

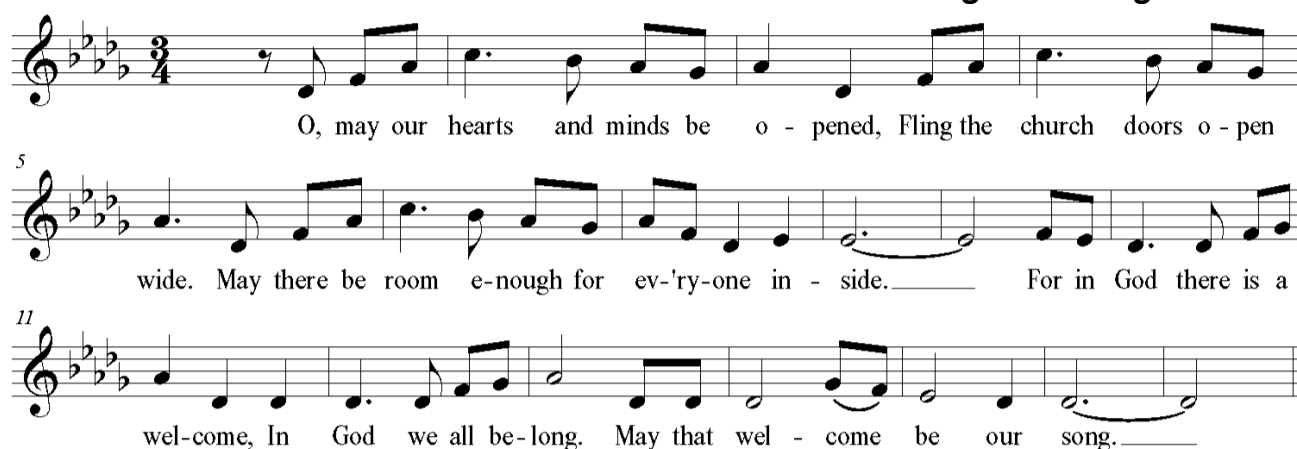
Rev. Hoeger
Library Team

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

Tracy Halter-Balin

Anthem

May God Bless You and Keep You
John Rutter

Sanctuary Choir

The children and youth are invited to go to Sunday School

Scripture

The Revelation to John 22:1-5
Common English Bible, adapted

Sara Schoenfelder

Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water, shining like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb through the middle of the city's main street. On each side of the river is the tree of life, which produces twelve crops of fruit, bearing its fruit each month. The tree's leaves are for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and the servants will worship God. They will see God's face, and

God's name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more. They won't need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them, and they will rule forever and always.

Contemporary Reading For Equilibrium, Sara Schoenfelder
from *To Bless the Space Between Us*
by John O'Donohue

Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the relief of laughter rinse through your soul.

As the wind loves to call things to dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.

Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth,
May your thoughts incline with reverence and respect.

As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.

As silence smiles on the other side of what's said,
May your sense of irony bring perspective.

As time remains free of all that it frames,
May your mind stay clear of all its names.

May your prayer of listening deepen enough
To hear in the depths the laughter of God.

Special Music My Wish George Carson, vocalist
Stephen Robson & Jeffrey Steele Curtis Heard, piano

Sermon For the Healing of the Nations Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

***Hymn No. 313** Like a Tree Beside the Waters
See Page 8

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

Sara Schoenfelder

Offertory

"God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens "
(Holy Manna)
Dale Wood

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

***Closing Hymn No. 556** God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
See Page 9

***Benediction**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

***Benediction Response**

Canticle of the Sun
Marty Haugen

Sanctuary Choir

*The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy.
Come, dance in the forest, come play in the field,
and sing, sing to the glory of God!*

Performance in Celebration of Dr. Randy and Dorothy King's 40th wedding anniversary.

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 Randy and Dorothy King. "In celebration of forty years of marriage: Forty years of us being kind in the moments when being right would've been a whole lot easier. A journey of faith, a lifetime of love, and a testament to God's blessings."

The Anthem and Special Music today are dedicated to Dr. Marc Dickey, in gratitude for his many years of faithful service to First Congregational Church of Long Beach.

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: the family of Jorge Rocha upon his passing (brother-in-law of José Sánchez-H.); Joanie Stiehl; Kirsten Pickus; Pam Chapin; Ken Sedgwick; Bill Peck and Jeff Ford; Cynde Soto; Ellie Keller (niece of Ruth Keller); Adreana Langston; Laura McCrary; David McMillin; Dale Whitney; Marion Hinze; Wayne Hester; Joanne Paine; and Aida Porteneuve.

Birthdays This Week – Happy Birthday!

29 - Scarlett Johnson, Erik Soe
01 - Donovan Hyman, Danica Witter
02 - Peggy Loa, Beth Whitesell, Pat Green
03 - Laurel Hoeger

This Week at First Church

Sunday, September 27

8:45 AM Sunday Study – Pownall Room & Zoom
9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
9:30 AM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room
10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
Sunday School – Klar 1 & 3, Sacred Space & High School Room

11:15 AM Beloved Bells – Sanctuary
11:30 AM In-Betweeners Small Group Meeting – Pownall Room
12:00 PM Crop Walk hosted by FCCLB – Pep Rally in Courtyard
Doors Open Tours – Sanctuary
12:30 PM Crop Walk Begins – Cedar Gate
1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center
2:00 PM Doors Open Tours – Sanctuary

Monday, September 28

10:00 AM Archives Group – Ramsay Dining Room

Tuesday, September 29

10:00 AM Handmakers Small Group Meeting – Koinonia Room

Wednesday, September 30

7:00 PM Diaconate Meeting – Zoom

Thursday, October 1

5:00 PM DAYS Leaders LB – Ramsay Dining Room

Jubellance Rehearsal – Bell Room

6:00 PM Bellissimo Rehearsal – Bell Room

7:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Friday, October 2

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

6:00 PM BOCA: Fahrenheit 451 Screening – Booth Chapel

Parents' Night Out

Saturday, October 3

9:00 AM Paddlers' Group – Sunset Beach

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

10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley

Sunday, October 4

8:45 AM Sunday Study – Pownall Room & Zoom

9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

9:30 AM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room

10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & [Youtube.com/1stChurch](https://www.youtube.com/1stChurch)

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

11:15 AM Beloved Bells – Bell 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 – Sacred Space & Zoom

Board of Stewardship and Finance Meeting – Klar 2

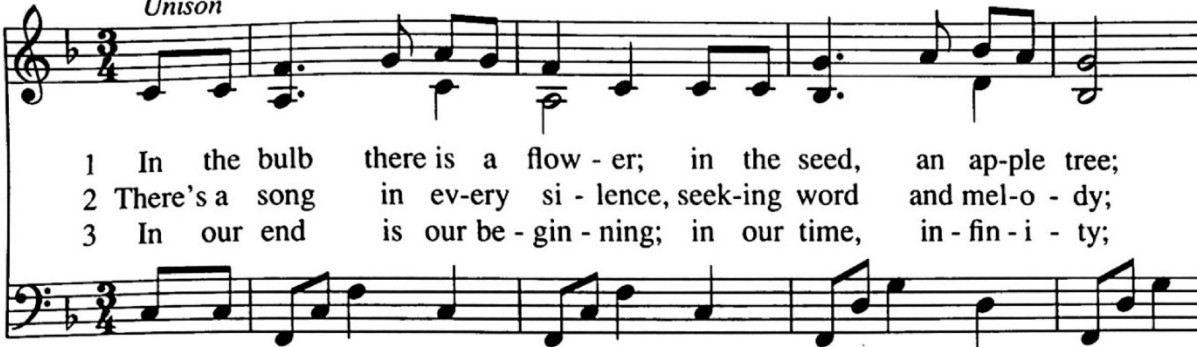
1:30 PM UCO Drop-In Center

5:00 PM OWL Parent Orientation – Ramsay Dining Room

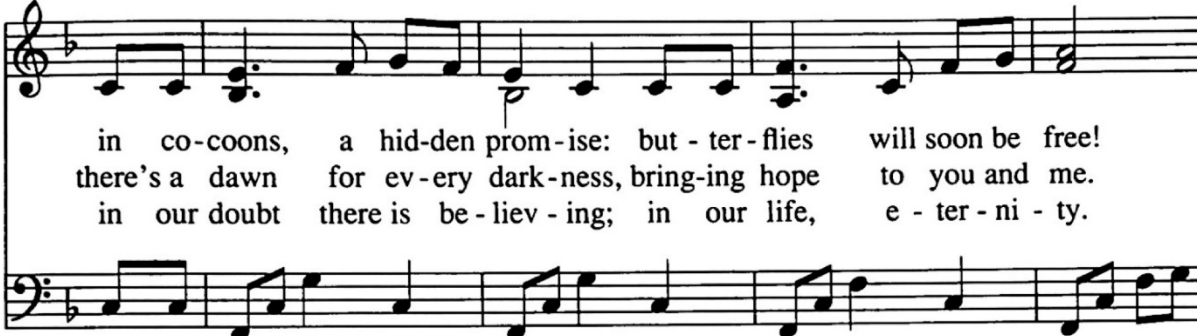
In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Natalie Sleeth, 1985

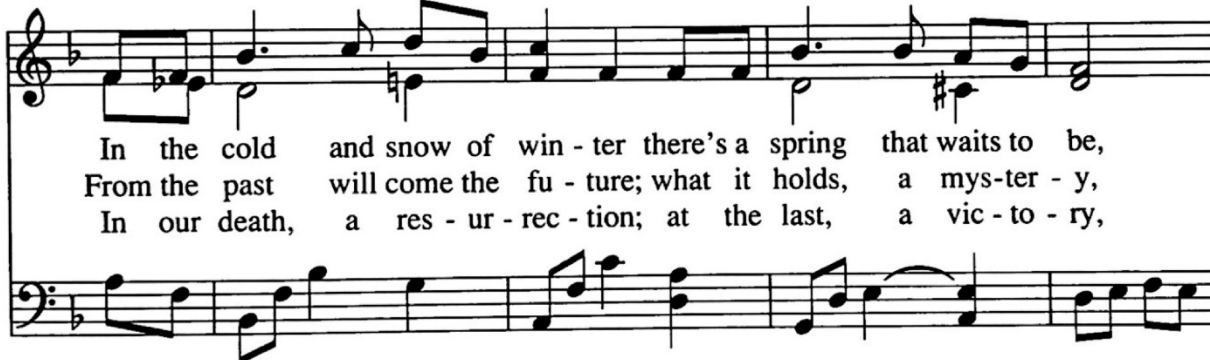
Unison



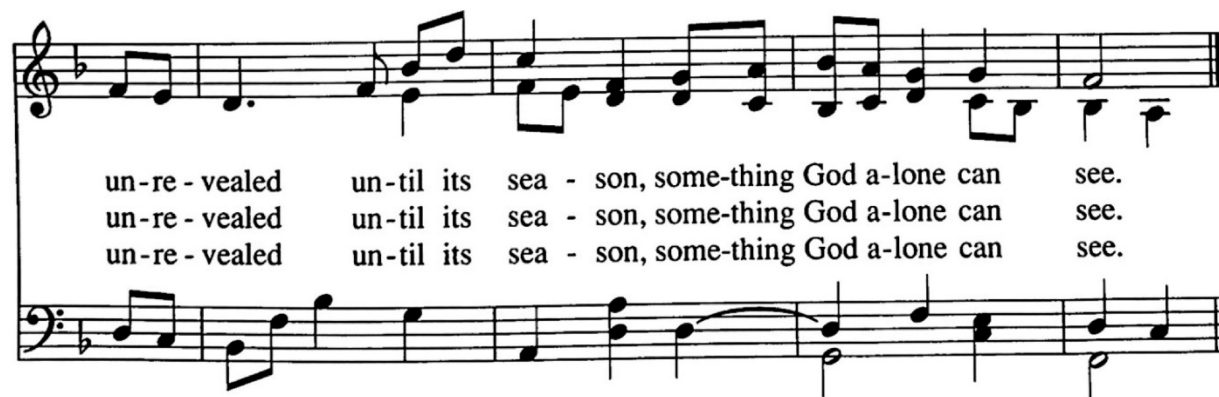
1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;



in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be free!
 there's a dawn for ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.
 in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.



In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,
 From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,
 In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,



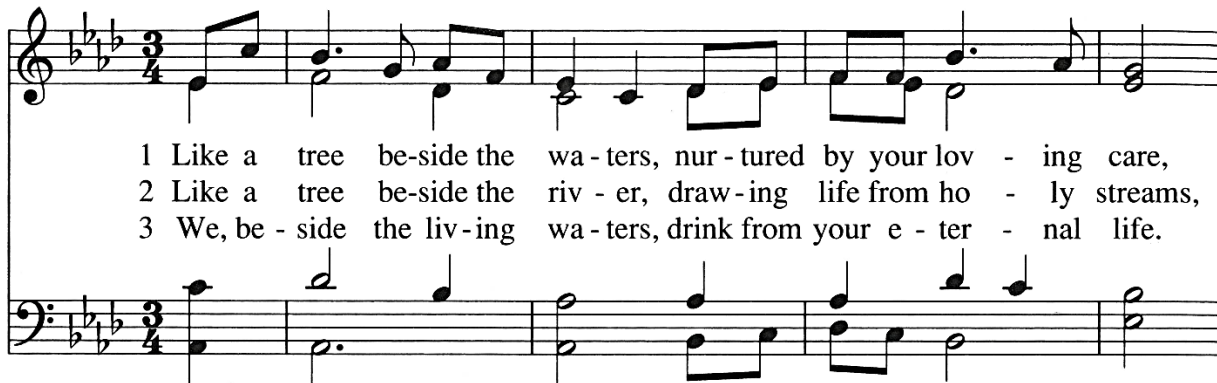
un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

Like a Tree beside the Waters

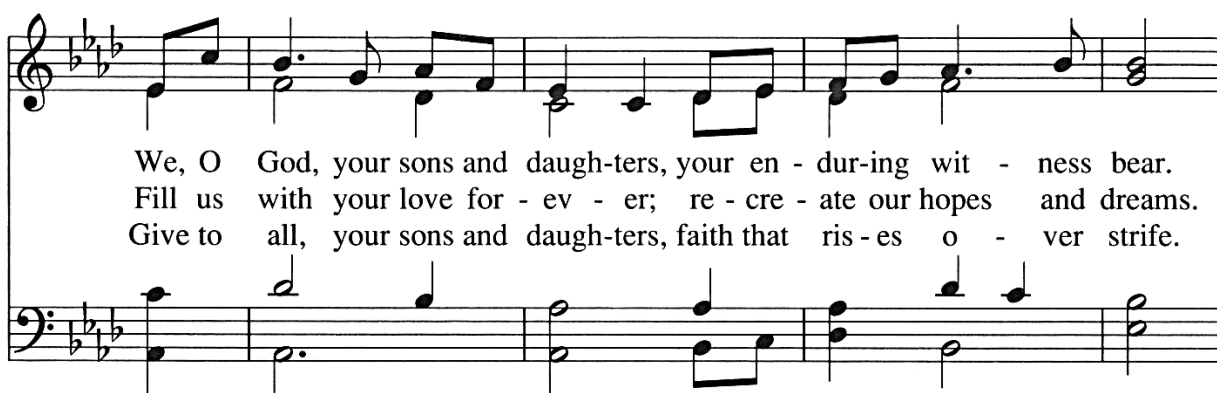
Jer. 17:7-8

Unison

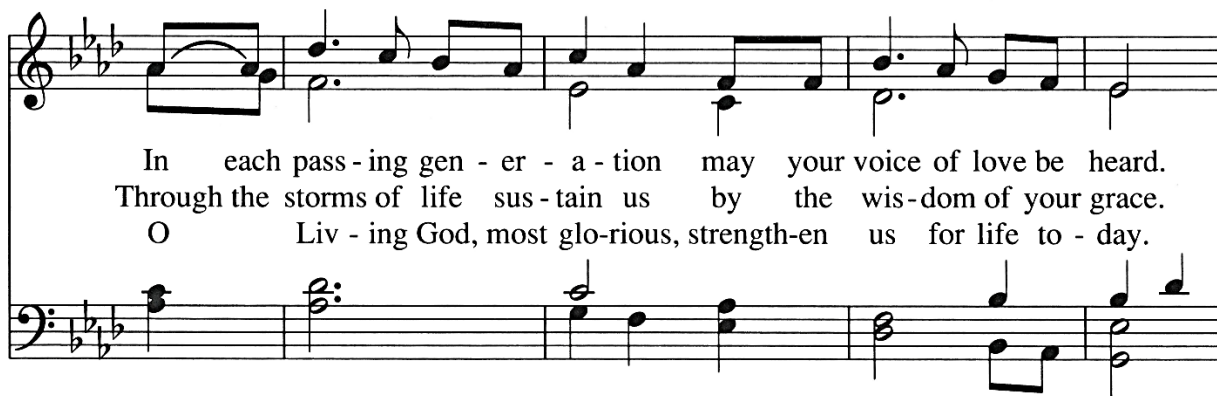
James F. D. Martin, 1992



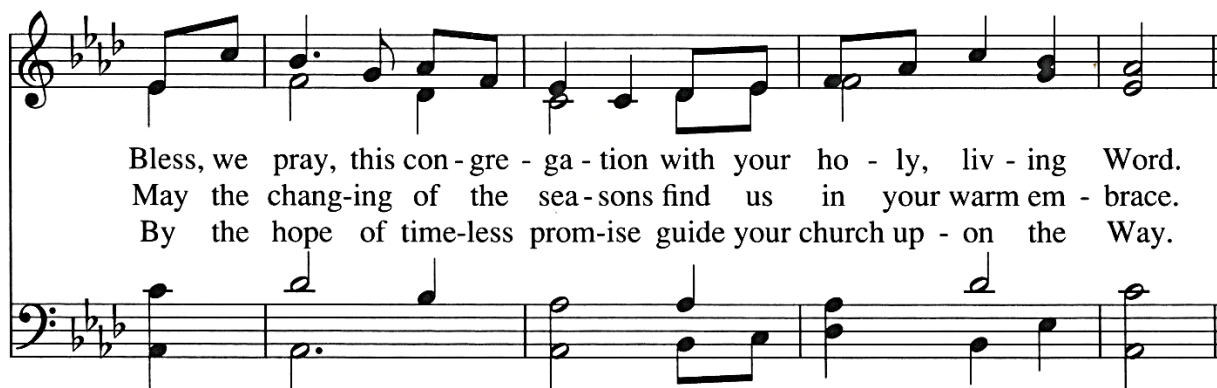
1 Like a tree be-side the wa-ters, nur-tured by your lov-ing care,
 2 Like a tree be-side the riv-er, draw-ing life from ho-ly streams,
 3 We, be-side the liv-ing wa-ters, drink from your e-ter-nal life.



We, O God, your sons and daugh-ters, your en-dur-ing wit-ness bear.
 Fill us with your love for-ev-er; re-cre-ate our hopes and dreams.
 Give to all, your sons and daugh-ters, faith that ris-es o-ver strife.



In each pass-ing gen-er-a-tion may your voice of love be heard.
 Through the storms of life sus-tain us by the wis-dom of your grace.
 O Liv-ing God, most glo-rious, strength-en us for life to-day.

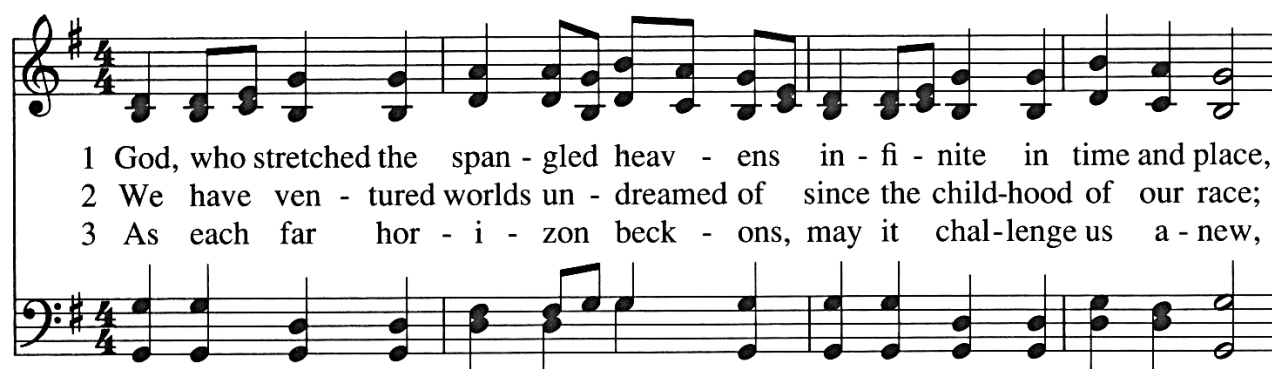


Bless, we pray, this con-gre-ga-tion with your ho-ly, liv-ing Word.
 May the chang-ing of the sea-sons find us in your warm em-brace.
 By the hope of time-less prom-ise guide your church up-on the Way.

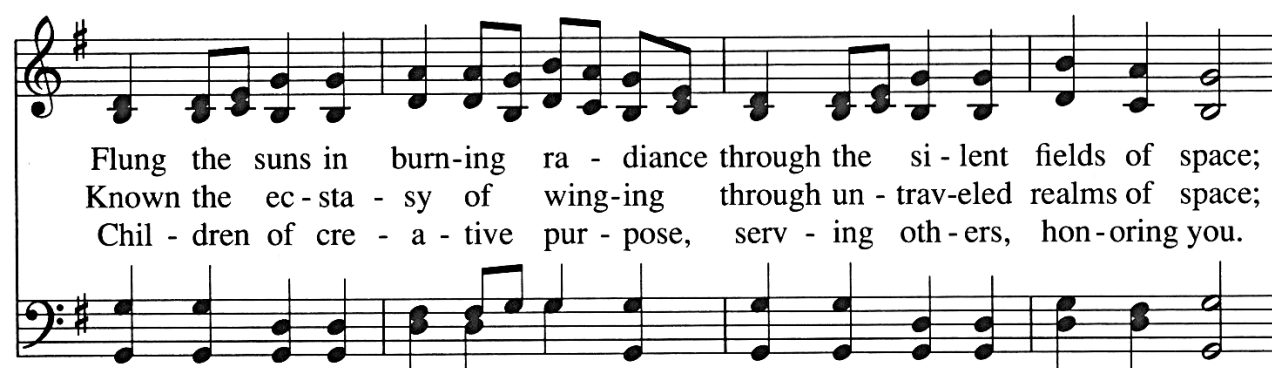
God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens 556

Catherine Cameron, 1967

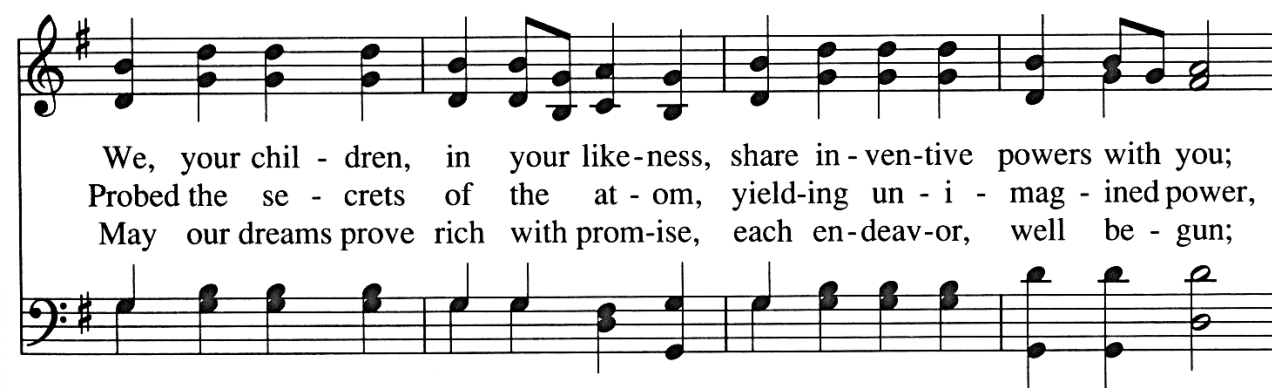
Gen. 5:1-2; Isa. 42:5-9



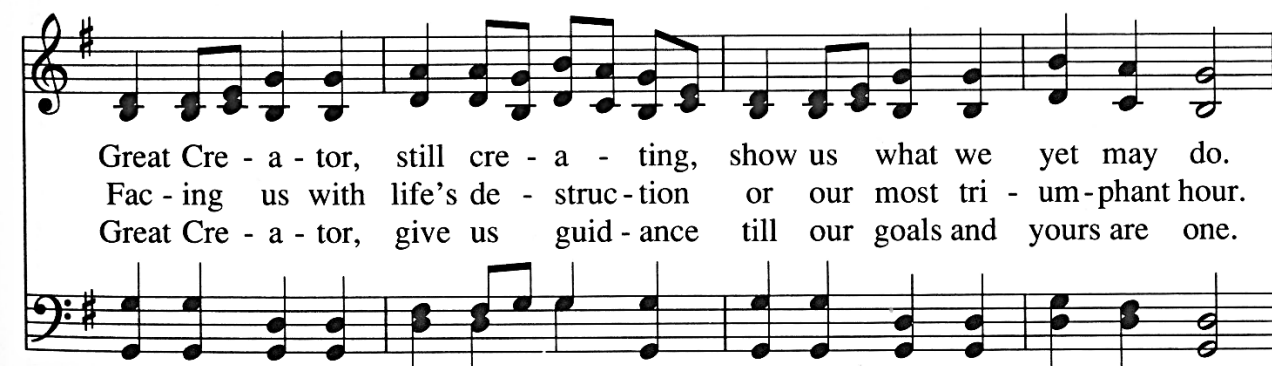
1 God, who stretched the span - gled heav - ens in - fi - nite in time and place,
2 We have ven - tured worlds un - dreamed of since the child-hood of our race;
3 As each far hor - i - zon beck - ons, may it chal-lenge us a - new,



Flung the suns in burn-ing ra - diance through the si - lent fields of space;
Known the ec - sta - sy of wing-ing through un - trav-eled realms of space;
Chil - dren of cre - a - tive pur - pose, serv - ing oth - ers, hon - oring you.



We, your chil - dren, in your like-ness, share in - ven-tive powers with you;
Probed the se - crets of the at - om, yield-ing un - i - mag - ined power,
May our dreams prove rich with prom-ise, each en-deav-or, well be - gun;



Great Cre - a - tor, still cre - a - ting, show us what we yet may do.
Fac - ing us with life's de - struc-tion or our most tri - um-phant hour.
Great Cre - a - tor, give us guid - ance till our goals and yours are one.



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

from the Board of Cultural Arts

MOVIE SCREENING

Fahrenheit 451 (1966)



**OCT 2
2026**

6:00 PM

Booth Chapel
241 Cedar Ave,
Long Beach, CA 90802



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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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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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Mercy Segastume Castillo, Sunday
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Rev. Jerry Stinson, Senior Minister
Emeritus

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