



First Congregational Church of Long Beach
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OCTOBER 18, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

Nocturne in Eb major, opus 9 Nr. 2

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Curtis Heard

Invocation

The Rev. Wally Hoeger

*Call to Celebration

Rev. Hoeger

One: Through prayer and practice, we pursue what is just, what is true, what is kind.

Many: With each new day, we hope for Love to lead us.

One: With discernment, we waded bravely into the struggles of life together.

Many: We yearn for wisdom that satisfies.

One: Persistently, faithfully, relentlessly, we keep our gaze set upon righteousness.

Many: Determined in hope, may the Holy be our firm foundation.

*Opening Hymn

Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes?

Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

(Tune: Hymn #332 As We Gather at Your Table)

"Is it lawful to pay taxes when they prop up Caesar's rule?"
So some people asked of Jesus, wanting him to seem a fool.
Saying "no" would be sedition; saying "yes" would be a sin.
Jesus changed the conversation, calling them to look within.

"Find a tax coin in your treasure; see the image that it bears.
Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. (Give to rulers what is theirs.)"
Yet he pressed on with his message; "Give to God what is God's own."
We who bear our Maker's image worship God and God alone.

Lord of all, in every nation, may your word be understood —
That we have an obligation to support the common good.
May our taxes, all together, fund our working hand in hand
So that life will be made better for all people in this land.

Still, we also hear your teaching: "Give to God what God is due."
May no ruler — overreaching — try to take the place of you.
May we listen to your message, may we honor what is yours;
May we, living in your image, seek your kingdom that endures.

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

5 wide. May there be room e-nough for ev-'ry-one in - side._____ For in God there is a

11 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

Special Music

"Do Unto Others"
Vicki Hancock Wright

All Seasons Choir

Time With Children

Tracy Halter-Balin

Anthem

Laudate Dominum, K.V. 339
W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Sanctuary Choir
Megan O'Toole, soprano

translation from Latin (Psalm 117): *Praise the Lord, all nations; Praise Him, all people. For He has bestowed His mercy upon us, And the truth of the Lord endures forever. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever, and for generations of generations. Amen.*

Scripture

Matthew 22:15-22
NRSVUE

Alison Mitchell

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Contemporary Reading

Excerpt from "A Litany for Survival"
By Audre Lorde

Alison Mitchell

For those of us who live at the
shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of
decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and
going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after

seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are
afraid

of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are
afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid

our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.

Sermon

Rev. Hoeger

***Hymn, No. 562**

Take My Gifts
See Page 7

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

Alison Mitchell

Offertory

Nocturne No. 5 in Bb major
John Field (1782-1837)

Curtis Heard

*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. 448** Take My Life, God, Let It Be
See Page 8

***Benediction**

Rev. Hoeger

Postlude Nocturne in Ab major (Liebestraum No. 3)
Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Curtis Heard

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 Chris Bobo in memory of his beloved wife, Michele Anderson.

Parish Concerns

Please remember in your prayers: The loved ones of Ellie Keller; Debbie Bond; Joanie Stiehl; Tim (brother-in-law of Jane Hansen); Bill Peck; Cynde Soto; Cassie Jackman-Roma; Logan Townsend; Adreana Langston; Laura McCrary; David McMillin; Dale Whitney; Michel Guy; Marion Hinze; Wayne Hester; Joanne Paine; and Aida Porteneuve.

Birthdays This Week – Happy Birthday!

19 - Kathleen O'Neal, Trystan Scott, Charlotte Waldo
20 - Ray Hedgpeth, Amelia Hyman
21 - Ginger Heil, Milo Penner
22 - Alison Morales
24 - Gil Griego

This Week at First Church

Sunday, October 18

- 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 – Bell Room
- 11:30 AM Women's Group – Pownall Room & Zoom
Archives Open House and Tour – Ramsay Dining Room & Archive Room
- 5:00 PM Landmark: A Man of No Importance – Sanctuary

Monday, October 19

- 10:00 AM Archives Group – Ramsay Dining Room
- 7:00 PM UCO Board Meeting – Zoom
Building, Historic Preservation & Safety Meeting – Hybrid Pownall & Zoom

Tuesday, October 20

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

Thursday, October 22

- 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

Friday, October 23

- 1:30 PM DAYS Grocery Program – Patterson Hall and potholder lot
- 7:30 PM Landmark: A Man of No Importance – Sanctuary

Saturday, October 24

- 9:30 AM Golf Group – off-site at a local golf course
- 10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley
- 7:30 PM Landmark: A Man of No Importance – Sanctuary

Sunday, October 25

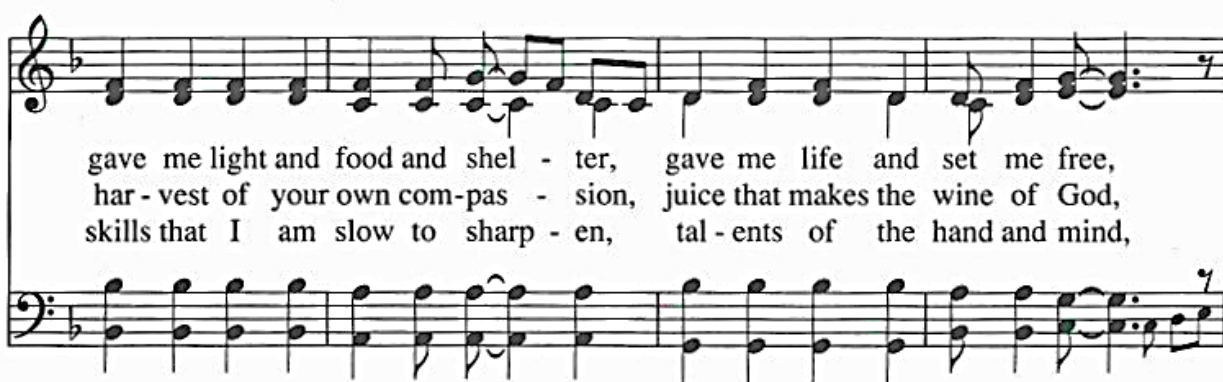
- 8:45 AM Sunday Study – Pownall Room & Zoom
- 9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
- 9:30 AM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room
- 10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stChurch
Sunday School – Klar 1 & 3, Sacred Space & High School Room
- 11:15 AM Harvest Festival and Lunch – Patterson Hall & Courtyard
- 7:00 PM Landmark: A Man of No Importance – Sanctuary

Take My Gifts

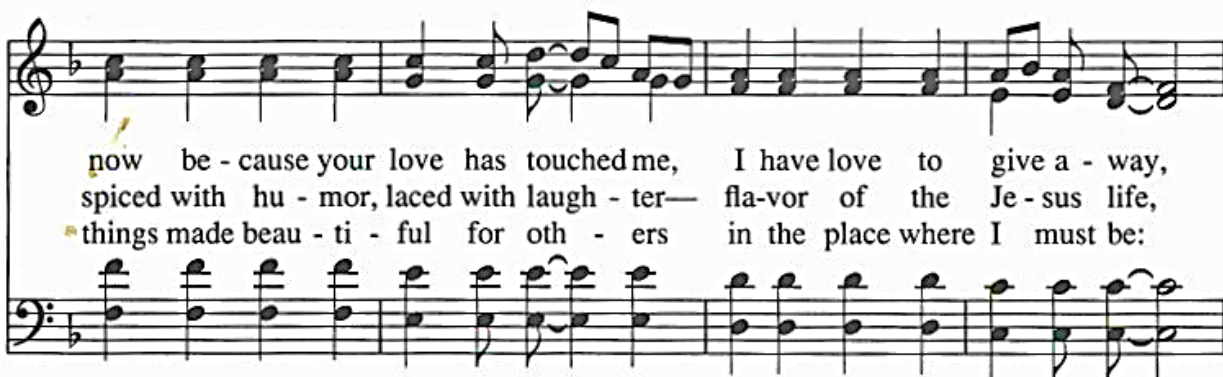
562

Shirley Erena Murray, 1991

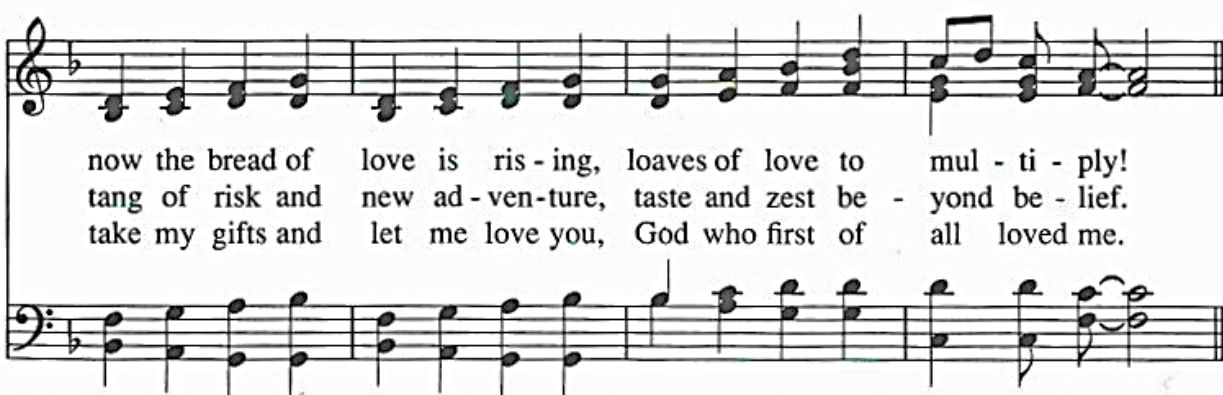

1 Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
 2 Take the fruit that I have gath - ered from the tree your Spir-it sowed,
 3 Take what-ev - er I can of - fer— gifts that I have yet to find,



gave me light and food and shel - ter, gave me life and set me free,
 har - vest of your own com-pas - sion, juice that makes the wine of God,
 skills that I am slow to sharp - en, tal - ents of the hand and mind,



now be - cause your love has touched me, I have love to give a - way,
 spiced with hu - mor, laced with laugh - ter— fla-vor of the Je - sus life,
 things made beau - ti - ful for oth - ers in the place where I must be:



now the bread of love is ris - ing, loaves of love to mul - ti - ply!
 tang of risk and new ad - ven - ture, taste and zest be - yond be - lief.
 take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

Take My Life, God, Let It Be

448

Frances R. Havergal, 1874; alt.

Rom. 12:1

1 Take my life, God, let it be con - se - crat - ed faith - ful - ly.
2 Take my spir - it, let it move at the im - pulse of your love.
3 Take my will; your will be done! Make your will and mine be one.
4 Take my love and help it grow; let my lov - ing ov - er - flow.

Take my mo - ments and my days, let them flow in cease-less praise.
Take my in - tel - lect and use all its pow - ers as you choose.
Take my heart, and by your grace make of it your dwell - ing place.
Take me now, and help me be part of Christ's com - mu - ni - ty.

Frances R. Havergal wrote her hymn following a visit to Areley House in Worcestershire, England. Among the ten persons at the house were "some unconverted . . . some converted but not rejoicing." Before she left, "everyone had got a blessing."

Tune: VIENNA 7.7.7.7.

Justin H. Knecht, 1797

Alternate tune: HENDON



CELEBRATE DIA DE LOS MUERTOS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF LONG BEACH

241 CEDAR AVE. LONG BEACH, CA 90802

SUNDAY, NOV. 1, 2026



SERVICE 10 AM

AFTER SERVICES LUNCH & LIVE MUSIC FEATURING:

MARIMBA TROPICAL

SUGGESTED DONATION FOR LUNCH \$10
PAY ONLINE AT CHURCH WEBSITE OR CASH IN PERSON

*Members of the community are invited to bring a framed
photo of a loved one who has passed away to
add to our community altar.
Bring photos to Oct. 25 or Nov. 1 Service to be included.*

Limited free parking available 3rd & Chestnut.
Additional parking available at Civic Center Lot at
Broadway & Cedar.

Civic Center Lot Validation available for
Sunday service attendees.





HARVEST FESTIVAL

OCT | 25 | 11:15AM
- 1PM

First Congregational Church

Chili and Cornbread, Crafts, Face
Painting, Games, Cake, Pumpkin
decorating and more! All ages welcome!

241 Cedar Ave. Long Beach, CA 90802
www.firstchurchlb.org



Women's Retreat

Learning to Walk in the Dark
based on book of the same name by Barbara Brown Taylor

NOV 6TH - 8TH, 2026

Pilgrim Pines Camp
Oak Glen, CA

For more info and register at:
firstchurchlb.org/retreat

\$195 Friday - Sunday
\$95 Saturday Only

Register by October 16th




Landmark
THEATRE FROM THE ♥ OF LONG BEACH
PRESENTS

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

*"You just have to love
who you love..."*

 **Oct 16 - Nov 1, 2026**
Fridays and Saturdays 7:00 pm
Sundays 2:00 pm

Artistic Director **Megan O'Toole**
Music Director **Curtis Heard**

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
www.mtishows.com



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

BOARD CHAIRS

Building, Historic Preservation & Safety:

Pam Chapin, Dorothy King

Christian Education:

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

AT-LARGE COUNCIL MEMBERS

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