



First Congregational Church of Long Beach  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**APRIL 20, 2025 • 10 A.M.**

**EASTER SUNDAY**

**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**

*Pie Jesu* from "Requiem"  
Gabriel Faure

Dr. Marc Dickey

Acolytes: Bethany Morales & Hannah Pearce

**Easter Proclamation**

**John 20:1-18**

The Rev. Wally Hoeger

The Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg

Common English Bible, adapted

Early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him." Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that had been on

Jesus' head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place. Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher).

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to God. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Abba and your Abba, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Teacher." Then she told them what he said to her.

### **\*Call to Easter Celebration**

Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg and Rev. Hoeger

One: At early dawn,  
when the light was just emerging and the shadows still long and deep  
the earth began to sing a tender and persistent hallelujah.

**MANY: And the resurrection smelled like death and dirt.  
Christ, the Power of Love, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.**

One: At early dawn,  
with the salt of tears still crusting their eyes  
the women began to sing a grieving and faithful hallelujah.

**MANY: And the empty tomb sounded like weeping and questions.  
Christ, the Wounded One, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.**

One: At early dawn,  
when no one could remember the sound of hope  
or the promise of a new day rising  
the world began to sing a fierce and determined hallelujah.

**MANY: And the rising up tasted like bread and rejoicing.  
Christ, the Way of Truth and Life, is risen indeed. Hallelujah.**

One: At early dawn,  
as each day brings forth new agonies and injustices  
we gather to sing a grateful and liberating hallelujah.

**MANY: And this Easter feels like protest and praise.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ is risen indeed.**

**Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.**

**\*Processional Hymn #233 (see page 8) Christ the Lord is Risen Today**

**Welcome and Announcements**

Rev. Hoeger

**Passing of the Peace**

Rev. Hoeger

**Special Music**

Easter Joy  
John A. Behnke

Bellissimo

**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 wide. May there be room e-nough for  
ev-'ry-one in - side. For in God there is a  
wel-come, In God we all be - long. May that  
wel - come be our song.

**Time with the Children**

Rev. Hoeger

*The children are dismissed to their Sunday School classes.*

**Anthem**

The Heavens are Telling  
Josef Haydn

Sanctuary Choir

**Scripture**

Isaiah 65:17-18  
New Revised Standard Version

Clayton Heard

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall

not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.

## Contemporary Reading

Clayton Heard

Seen: For Easter Day  
By Jan Richardson

While it was still dark.  
While it was still night.  
While she could not see.  
While she thought death held sway.  
While she grieved.  
While she wept.  
While it was still dark, resurrection began.

You had not imagined  
that something so empty  
could fill you  
to overflowing,

and now you carry  
the knowledge  
like an awful treasure  
or like a child  
that curls itself  
within your heart:  
how the emptiness

will bear forth  
a new world  
you cannot fathom  
but on whose edge  
you stand.

So why do you linger?  
You have seen,  
and so you are  
already blessed.  
You have been seen,  
and so you are  
the blessing.

There is no other word  
you need.  
There is simply  
to go  
and tell.  
There is simply  
to begin.

## Special Music

I Lived  
by Ryan Tedder and Noel Zancanella

Charlie Carlos, Vocalist  
Curtis Heard, Piano

## Sermon

While it was Still Dark

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

**Hymn, No. 238** (see page 9) Now the Green Blade Rises

## Prayers of the People

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

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

Clayton Heard

Offertory

Festival Alleluia

Dr. Dickey

*Lasst Uns Erfreuen* (from *Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, 1623)  
setting, Dan Miller

*Scan for our secure online donation site or go to  
[firstchurchlb.org/donate](http://firstchurchlb.org/donate)*

*Or mail a check to First Congregational Church,  
241 Cedar Ave., Long Beach, CA 90802*



\*Doxology: Old Hundredth (Hymn No. 7)

**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 Thanksgiving

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

\***Recessional Hymn #231** (see page 10) Because You Live, O Christ

\***Benediction**

Rev. Malleis-Sternberg

\***Benediction Response**

Alleluia  
by Richard Rodgers

**Postlude**

"Eternal Joy" from Triptych for Organ  
Noël Goemanne

Dr. Dickey

One License: 706147-A (in support of our livestream)

Some of our worship resources today come from UCC Worship Works, and today's call to celebration was written by the Dr. Sharon R. Fennema. And, our contemporary reading is shared with permission

## ***Birthdays This Week – Happy Birthday!***

20 Deb Buller, Jeff Ford

22 Kimel Conway

23 Richard Landuyt, Melody O’Keefe, Dante Wilson

24 Jeff McFarland, Cynthia Snell

## ***Parish Concerns***

Please remember in your prayers: Pam Chapin, Bill Peck on the passing of his mother Mary Amelia Perry Roberge, Megan Holycross, Don Donan, Kathleen Odaniels, Ayomide Akinnagbe, Beau Chandler, Kathy Wallace-Phelps, Wayne Hester, Joanne Paine, Aida Porteneuve, Marion Hinze, Ben Rockwell, Dale Whitney.

*To submit joys and concerns for inclusion in the bulletin and the newsletter and to subscribe to the newsletter, contact the office: [office@firstchurchlb.org](mailto:office@firstchurchlb.org).*

## ***Easter Flowers***

*The flowers adorning the sanctuary are dedicated by the following donors:*

Sandy Cala

Chris Bobo

Joanne Cox

In honor, memory and celebration of Primer

In celebration of the life of the church

In memory of my parents, in honor of my children and their families, and in special celebration of my granddaughter’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthday

Chuck Fowler

In memory of Harold & Ruth Fowler, Russ & Evelyn Franks, Jim Fowler and Jim Hardeman

Frank Bell

In memory of Charlotte Bell Coleman

Pamela Chapin

In memory of my parents, A.E. & Mary Chapin

Heather Chambers

In memory of Steve Chambers, Spicer & Della Ramsay

Melody & Kevin O’Keefe

In memory of Pat & Sue O’Keefe, Spicer & Della Ramsay

Stephen McLellan

In memory of Bitty. In honor of Elizabeth Amory Jazmine Covery McLellan. In celebration of the Bitty Foundation

Petra Malleis-Sternberg  
& David Malleis

In celebration of all of our official and chosen aunts, uncles and grandparents who have gone in love before us, and all of our children, godchildren, and bonus children who are leading love forward

Caleb Aparicio	In memory of Rosa Aparicio
Kathleen O'Neal	In memory of Patrick O'Neal
Jose Sanchez-H and Tina Datsko	In memory of Victor & Margarita Sanchez, Joseph and Doris Datsko, Lynn Branson, and Domenic Cretara
Barry Stees	In memory of Audrey Stees
Charlotte Waldo	In honor of Bruce and Evonne Waldo
Alison Morales	In celebration of Matt & Tracy Balin's dedication to the children of our church. In memory of Carolie Rice, our much loved Granny
Deidre Flanagan & Mark Hill	In memory of Dottie & Marshall Hill and Jim & Wally Flanagan
Jennifer Tafel	In memory of Mareta Saul and F. Robert Tafel
Paul Boyd-Batstone	In memory of Brenda Batstone, who would've turned 70 years old this month
Joy Park	In memory of my mom, Wosun Lee
Carmen Abbott	In celebration of FCCLB's fantastic choir
Nora O'Connor	In memory of Hugh & Diana O'Connor
Olivia Esteves	In honor of Angela Esteves, Maria López, Roy Esteves and Don Prechtl
Pat & Bob Kalayjian	In celebration of their son Nick, and grandsons Adam & Gus
Michael Haumesser	In memory of Thomas Haumesser and Barbra Haumesser
Darryl Heath	In memory of Jerry & Ruth Heath
Alison Mitchell	In memory of Jack & Rev. Sandra Edwards
William Kuehl	In memory of David Clements
Danny Reich	In memory of the Reich and Garcia families, In honor of Ray Reich, In celebration of the Redfield and Knighten Families
Curtis & Lisa Heard	In memory of Jan Bode, in honor of Jim & Julia Heard, and Paul Bode
Marion Hinze	In memory of my husband Vern Hinze
Carrie Marraro	In memory of Philip Enwally
Matt & Tracy Balin	In memory of our parents Bob Halter, Lee Halter, Ron & Shirley Balin, and in celebration of all of the FCC kids and Youth
Bill Peck	In memory of Mary & Warren Roberge

Matt. 28:5-8; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; 54-57

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

1 Christ the Lord is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 2 Let the Vic - tor's peo - ple sing, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 3 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Al - le - lu - ia!

Mor - tal tongues and an - gels say: Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Where, O death, is now your sting? Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Fol - lowing our ex - alt - ed Head, Al - le - lu - ia!

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Dy - ing once, Christ lives to save, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Death in vain for - bids Christ rise, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Al - le - lu - ia!

Sing, glad heavens, and earth re - ply: Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Where your vic - to - ry, O grave? Al - le - lu - ia!  
 God has o - pened par - a - dise, Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Al - le - lu - ia!



## Because You Live, O Christ

Luke 24:1-10

Shirley Erena Murray, 1987

1 Be - cause you live, O Christ, the gar - den of the  
 2 Be - cause you live, O Christ, the spir - it bird of  
 3 Be - cause you live, O Christ, the rain - bow of your

world has come to flow - er, the shad - ows of the tomb  
 hope is freed for fly - ing, our ca - ges of de - spair  
 peace will span cre - a - tion, the col - ors of your love

are flood - ed with your res - ur - rec - tion pow - er.  
 no long - er keep us closed and life - de - ny - ing.  
 will draw all hu - man - kind to ad - o - ra - tion.

The stone has rolled a - way and death can - not im - pris - on! O

sing this Eas - ter Day, for Je - sus Christ has ris - en, has

ris - en, has ris - en, has ris - en!

## Now the Green Blade Rises

238

*John M. C. Crum, 1928; alt.**Matt. 27:57-28:7; Luke 23:50-24:12*

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain;  
 2 In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,  
 3 Christ came forth at Eas - ter, like the ris - en grain,  
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

Wheat that in dark earth for man - y days has lain;  
 Think - ing that their Love would nev - er wake a - gain,  
 Je - sus, who for three days in the grave had lain,  
 Christ's warm touch can call us back to life a - gain,

Love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been:  
 Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen:  
 Quick from the dead the ris - en One is seen:  
 Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

*Refrain*  
 Love is come a - gain like wheat that ris - es green.

# ***This Week at First Church***

## **Sunday, April 20 – Easter Sunday**

9:00 AM Easter Breakfast

9:30 AM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stchurch  
Sunday School – Vaughn 4, Klar 1, Sacred Space & High School Room

11:15 AM Egg Hunt and Reception – Patterson Hall and Courtyard

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

## **Monday, April 21 – Easter Monday**

Church Closed

## **Tuesday, April 22**

10:00 AM Handmakers Group Meeting – Koinonia

7:00 PM Church Council Meeting – Zoom

## **Wednesday, April 23**

7:00 PM Sacred Practices – Sacred Space

## **Thursday, April 24**

5:00 PM Jubellance Rehearsal – Bell Room

6:00 PM Bellissimo Rehearsal – Bell Room

7:30 PM Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

## **Friday, April 25**

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

## **Saturday, April 26**

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

10:00 AM UCO Food Drive – Maple Way Alley

6:00 PM Rainbow Connections, Queer Prom – multiple spaces

## **Sunday, April 27**

8:45 AM Adult Education – Pownall Room & Zoom

9:00 AM All Seasons Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

9:30 AM Charming Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Room

Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

10:00 AM Service of Celebration – Sanctuary & Youtube.com/1stchurch  
Sunday School – Vaughn 4, Klar 1, Sacred Space & High School Room

11:15 AM Beloved Bells Rehearsal – Bell Room

11:30 AM New Members Lunch – Pownall Room

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

## **Upcoming Events**

5/10 7:00 PM Long Beach Youth Chorus Concert

5/18 9:30 AM Pride Sunday Worship on the Bluff & Parade

5/31 12:00 PM Bowling @ Bowlero

5/30-6/15 Landmark Theatre Company presents, *Bright Star*

6/8 11:30 AM Young People's Concert & Ice Cream Social

6/28 5:00 PM All-Ages Potluck & Game Night



First Congregational Church of Long Beach  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## CHURCH OFFICERS

**Randel King**, Moderator

**Doug Emslie**, Vice Moderator

**Julie Gholson**, Treasurer

**Kirsten Pickus**, Secretary

## BOARD CHAIRS

Building, Historic Preservation & Safety:

Victoria Bryant & Pam Chapin

Christian Education:

Elena Legeros

Cultural Arts:

Julie Ford & Tim Mountain

Diaconate:

Harold Sutherland & Charlotte Waldo

Parish Life:

Alison Mitchell

Social Justice and Outreach:

Chris Bobo

Stewardship & Finance:

Olivia Esteves & Jane Hansen

## AT-LARGE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Terry McKiernan, Sebastian Jobin-

Reyes, Heather Chambers

## COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

Curtis Heard

## POET-IN-RESIDENCE

Tina Datsko de Sánchez

## HISTORIAN

Bob Kalayjian

## BOOKKEEPERS

Melody O'Keefe & Heather Chambers at

Heather R. Chambers, CPA, Inc.

## CLERGY

**Rev. Petra Malleis-Sternberg**, Senior  
Minister

[pmsternberg@firstchurchlb.org](mailto:pmsternberg@firstchurchlb.org)

**Rev. Wally Hoeger**, Associate Minister

[whoeger@firstchurchlb.org](mailto: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

**Yesi Castro**, **Marley Frederick**,

**Sebastian Lytwynec**, **Mercy Torres**,  
Sunday School

**Homero Salgado**, **Justin Strawther**,

**Elijah Brown**, Custodians

**Álvaro Cáceres-Muñoz**, Audio Engineer

**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

**Rev. Laverne R. Joseph**, Former President  
& CEO, Retirement Housing Foundation