

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
*of Los Angeles*

*Journey Into Wholeness:  
The Twelve Steps as Sacred Art*

*Carrying the Message  
Pentecost*

*May 19th, 2024*



Fire and Breath © Jan L. Richardson

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## **The Gathering of the People**

*First Congregational Church of Los Angeles is a safe place for all people, and we celebrate our diversity of race, creed, age, ability, gender, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions...We extend a warm welcome to all this morning and especially those who are with us for the first time. Your presence both enriches us and this time of celebration together ~*

### **Organ Prelude Concert**

**Dr. Christoph Bull, Organist-in-Residence**

Improvisation on LYONS and NETTLETON

Meditation on *Veni Creator Spiritus*

Komm, Heil'ger Geist (Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow)

Tocatta in D minor and Fugue in D Major, Opus 59 No. 5-6 (Max Reger)

Allegro in C Major (Thomas René Babou) and Improvisation

Come, God Creator, Holy Spirit, BWV 631 (Johann Sebastian Bach)

### **Chiming of the Hour**

**Welcome**

**Rev. Michael Lehman**

### **Pentecost Words of Gathering**

**Rev. Lehman**

Breath of God, come like a mighty wind and fill this place.

*Let your Spirit, wild with creativity, be upon us.*

Through your holy chaos,

*trouble our complacency,*

break open our hearts,

*awaken our senses,*

free us from the need to control,

*and renew our moral imaginations.*

Make us alive with possibility,

and rich in dreams of what could be.

*Come, Holy Spirit, Come!*

[enfleshed]

*Please stand in body or in spirit for our Pentecost Hymn of Gathering*

### **\*Pentecost Hymn of Gathering**

*O Spirit of Power*

LYONS

O Spirit of Power, who dwells in us all,

Inspire us each hour to follow your call.

Awaken our vision to all we can be,

And challenge our labor to set people free.

Though many your names, Love reigns over all;

With you we can claim our life giving call.

Cast out all our fear so with you we can soar,

Creating a world never dreamed of before.

O Spirit of Love, compassionate Friend,  
Within and above, your strength knows no end.  
Your rivers of healing revive thirsty land;  
All goodness and nourishment flow from your hand.

O Spirit of Power, O Love beyond thought,  
Our gifts with you flower; what wonders are wrought.  
Creator, Redeemer and Comforting Guide,  
Illumine our lives as with you we abide.

- lyrics by Jan Aldredge-Clanton

**\*Pentecost Prayer of Awareness**

**Rev. Lehman**

Spirit of the Living God, in you all things are in motion.  
Where change is needed in our thinking or our beliefs,  
in our practices or our ways of relating to each other,  
be our guide.

Give us courage to stay present to that which  
makes us uncomfortable.  
Give us patience when we are unsettled.  
Give us strength when we face loss.  
Give us the faith to welcome necessary change,  
eagerly or tepidly, for the sake of your dream for us.  
[adpt/enfleshed]

May it be so.  
*May it be so for all of us.*  
*Amen and Amen!*

**\*Introit**

*"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"*  
Cathedral Ringers, Grace Sheldon-Williams, *Director*

arr. KEVIN MCCHESENEY

**\*The Lord's Prayer**

**Rev. Chad Tanaka Pack**

*Our [God], who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.*

**\*Gloria Deo**

Glory be to God, and to the Christ and to the Holy Ghost,  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.  
World without end, Amen, Amen.

**\*Passing of the Peace**

**Rev. Tanaka Pack**

The spirit of imagination is a gift to all people.  
The spirit of faithfulness is the gift of the earth.  
The spirit of hope breathes  
in those who are marginalized in this city  
and throughout the world.

The spirit of freedom  
was announced by those who went before us  
and we proclaim it again today,  
because the Spirit of Love is Christ's  
gift to the church in every age.

This morning may we recognize:  
*the love of the Spirit of God in Scripture,*  
*the love of the Spirit of God among us,*  
*the love of the Spirit of God within us.*

This morning, may the Peace and Love of God be with you.  
*And also with you!*

*You are invited to share this ancient greeting with a bow.*

**Please be seated**

**Children's Conversation**

**Claire Kelly**

Following this conversation, children are invited to join us for our Sunday morning programming which is held outside near the playground. If you were unable to check your children in prior to the service, please accompany them to our Children's Area and check them in before returning to the service. Children must be picked up after worship before you head to Coffee Hour in the Courtyard.

**Welcome of New Members & Baptism**

**Rev. Lehman & Rev. Tanaka Pack**

*Ayur Barduev | Victoria Berry | Leslie Ezeh | Jim Maslowski  
Jeremy Masys | Chambers Stevens | Betsy Sullenger*

*God, we welcome these friends into community with us. We thank you for their presence here and their willingness to join in the work of this congregation. Grant that we may be caring, supportive, prayerful, and intentional friends, working together for their good. Grant that they may find us a community of true welcome, acceptance, and belonging, a community of love and peace, a community of intellectual rigor and thoughtfulness, and a community of generosity and gratitude.*

*Together, we are the people of God in this place.  
Together, we will share God's love with our city, and our world.  
May it always be so. Amen and Amen!*

**Reading from our Religious Tradition from the Book of Acts**

**Rev. Tanaka Pack**

*Thanks be to God!*

**Invitation to Silence and Prayer**

*Silence*

**Meditation Anthem**

“Thank You For Hearing Me”

SINÉAD O’CONNOR

*You are invited to sing with the choir while lighting candles. Each phrase will be sung four times. Feel free to sing in a language of your choice.*

“Thank you for hearing me, thank you for loving me, thank you for seeing me,  
thank you for not leaving me, thank you for staying with me, thank you for not hurting me,  
you are gentle with me, thank you for silence with me, thank you for helping me,  
thank you for loving me, thank you for hearing me.”

**Prayer of our Hearts**

Together we pray:

*Come, Holy Spirit, come,*

*Breathe into our hearts this day.*

*Bless and inspire this sacred time*

*that we may live Spirit-filled lives*

*of love and compassion for all.*

*May it be so.*

*May it be so for all of us.*

*Amen!*

**Sermon**

*Carrying the Message*

Rev. Laura Vail Fregin

**Invitation to Generosity**

Rev. Tanaka Pack

*At First Church, we consider every pledge, tithe, offering and contribution a gift for the life of our community of faith. No matter how it’s given, our gifts show gratitude. You are invited to visit our website at [fcla.org/give](http://fcla.org/give). Our hospitality team will also be at the exits when the service ends with baskets to collect gifts.*

**Offertory**

“More Waters Rising”

SARO LYNCH-TOMASON, arr. SAUNDER CHOI

**\*Doxology**

From all that dwell below the skies,

let the Creator’s praise arise!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Your name shall sound and praises soar

till suns shall rise and set no more.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

[adapt/Isaac Watts, 1719]

**\*Prayer of Offering**

Rev. Lehman

*Spirit of Justice, come.*

*Spirit of Life, come.*

*Spirit of Compassion and Truth, come.*

*Give us fresh visions of a world restored  
and new dreams of the impossible made possible.  
By your Spirit, may our faith be enlivened  
and our commitment to you and all of our neighbors,  
be renewed.*

*With gratitude for all you have done, and are doing,  
with us in this time and place,  
we pray. [adpt/enfleshed]  
Amen and Amen!*

*Please be seated*

**Life at First Church**

**Rev. Lehman**

**Words of Blessing**

**Rev. Fregin**

God has gathered us together for a purpose  
a living, moving, breathing purpose  
that calls us to live differently,  
to live passionately,  
and to live courageously.

*With the Spirit as our guide,  
let us go from here open to the wild ways of God,  
however and in whomever She may be revealed.*  
[enfleshed]

May it be so on this day,  
*and in all the days to come!*

**Choral Response**

*"Go Now In Peace"*  
Cathedral Choir

**\*Pentecost Hymn for the Journey**     *Living God, All of Your Children*

NETTLETON

Living God, all of your children need your Spirit's signs of love.  
Let your pow'r break out among us: come as wind, and flame, and dove.  
Take away our fear of freshness, things untested, risky, new.  
Wake our hearts to joy and wonder, first fruits of our life in you.

Bring to birth our unformed promise with your life-bestowing breath;  
Lift us from the mire of mis'ry, guard us through the shades of death.  
Raise our hearts to windswept vistas, where the Spirit helps us see  
All the hopes that lie before us, all the dreams that yet will be.

Burn away the fears and failings that distort our sense of worth;  
Warm our hearts with song and laughter, filled with grace of holy mirth.  
Let the lamp of faith grow brighter as we journey by its light;  
Lead us closer to your purpose till our wills with yours unite.

Keep alive the holy music of a life attuned to prayer;  
May that ceaseless dove-like whisper, ground and guide us in your care.  
As we labor in your service, help our faithfulness increase,  
That our lives may bear true witness to your justice and your peace.

- adapted from a hymn by Carl P. Daw, Jr.

*Please be seated for the Postlude*

**Postlude**

**Dr. Christoph Bull, Organist-in-Residence**

Toccata in D minor - Reprise (Max Reger)

### **Inside The Music**

"I only recently heard Sinéad O'Connor's "Thank You For Hearing Me." I immediately thought that it reflected the goals and spirit of our community. As Pentecost is the day that we celebrate the birth of spiritual community, it seemed a natural fit. The simplicity of her formal choice gives the song immediacy. It's basically a chorus that repeats itself with one word changed each time. The gratitude that opens each new chorus pulls you in more closely with each repetition. The different ideas that flow from gratitude seem to deepen connection as they flow from a perhaps forgotten place that feels like home. As a progressive Christian community, we are careful when considering how to convey our message. Yet, at the heart of whoever we are is love, gratitude, and compassion. We are adding various language to the song to represent all of the languages spoken during the first Pentecost, and as a way of demonstrating that we are strong in our diversity. Saro-Lynch Thomason is a folk artist from North Carolina. Our friend Saunder wrote this inspired choral arrangement of her "More Waters Rising." It is a justice piece, encouraging us to keep moving. As we persist, we recognize that challenges are the substance of our successes. The divinity within us continues to recreate us as we strive toward a just and equitable society." ~ Dr. David Harris

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