

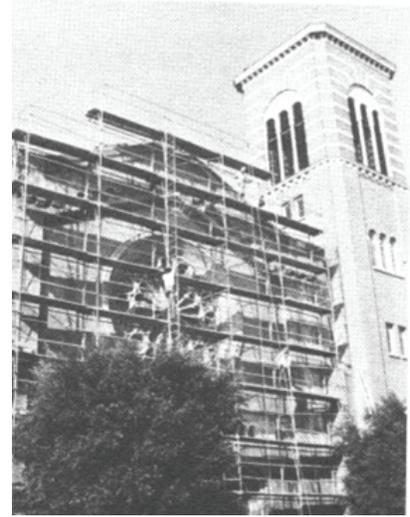
*Preserving Our Legacy*  
First Congregational Church

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*History*

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Jotham and Margaret Bixby were pioneers who deeded the land that helped to found Long Beach and The First Congregational Church. Inspired by Margaret Bixby's father, a Congregational minister, they quickly transitioned their Cerritos Hall at the corner of Third Street and Cedar Avenue from the first public building in Long Beach to the home of the First Congregational Church in 1888. Our iconic Italian Renaissance style building, constructed with the initial investment of the Bixbys at 3rd and Cedar, has been the home of First Congregational Church since 1914. Throughout its 100+ year history, congregation and community members have worked together to preserve and protect this legacy of the congregation's founders. These projects included earthquake repairs in 1933, major earthquake retrofitting in the 1980s, and the construction of Pilgrim Hall, an expansion to provide education and community meeting space, in 2001.



For over 100 years, the sanctuary has served as a lecture hall, a venue for civic debates, a stage for musical performances, a spiritual space for the community to come together in times of civic and national crisis, and on Sunday mornings, a sacred space for worship.

Our 1888 statement of faith still guides this congregation: "Christianity cannot be expressed in a creed...it is the religion of daily life and is to be applied to all human affairs." This congregation helped create interfaith organizations, found programs for low income and homeless neighbors, especially neighborhood children, and shared in developing affordable housing and housing for people with disabilities. In 1992, the church became one of the first "Open and Affirming" UCC congregations, welcoming the GLTB community to membership and leadership.

