



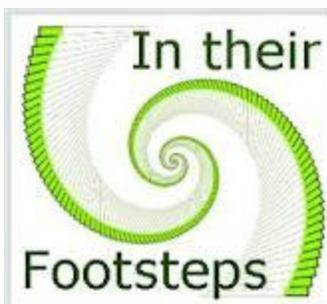
FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Preparing for a Pilgrimage

BY Rev Kathleen Owens

Spring is one of my favorite seasons with more hours of light, budding trees and the feeling of life coming forth. And April has become a favorite month because it is the month I started my ministry with First Church. This April 16th marks the beginning of my sixth year here (amazing how time flies!) And later in my sixth year I will take the first sabbatical of my professional ministry. I will take five months of sabbatical leave and it will be scheduled much like Arvid's. I will be away from September through November of this year. With Jan, I will travel to Turkey, Greece and Italy. I want to study more about the early church, essentially before the church decided that Jesus was divine. It is a pilgrimage of sorts because I want to see for myself the land where early church communities developed and how they lived. I want to see the landscapes and the waters – to touch the rocks and visit the caves. You see, I think there is a lot to learn and gain by studying how people came into their own truth before doctrines and dogmas were established. I think we UUs have much in common with the church of the first, second and third centuries. My goal is to study, learn, stretch and live in that space for a while. After meeting new people, having new experiences and being open to differing faith traditions, I intend to create religious education classes, sermons and more from having this time away.



Like Arvid did, I'll return to First Church for the month of December – to renew our connections, meet the new people who have joined us and to catch up on all that's happening. And then in January and February of 2013, I will travel to other large UU congregations to learn how they are thriving in their communities and what gems I can bring back and share with our community. I intend to visit with colleagues in New York City, Tulsa, OK, Dallas, TX and I will attend the UU Ministers Association Center Days in FL in February. That conference is a week-long intensive time with worship, workshops and discussions with my colleagues from around the country. I think it's very important to learn from others and be open to experimenting so that we might become even more successful here in San Diego County. All along the way I will blog about the various experiences.

I am more grateful than I can express that this community believes in and supports sabbaticals for its professional staff. I will miss you very much and look forward to our time together until we leave in September.

with deep gratitude,

Rev. Kathleen Owens

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Arvid's Arcana

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

Have you taken the www.Beliefnet.com quiz, where you answer questions about your beliefs and attitudes and the quiz will let you know which religion is most compatible to you? It turns out that many visitors find their way to First Church because they've taken that quiz and found out that they were UUs without knowing it. Religious demographers tell us that religion in American is undergoing a seismic shift. If current trends continue church attendance in this country will resemble that of secular Europe within a generation.

That doesn't mean that people don't need religious communities. It turns out they still long for one. The young adult generation just doesn't think of church as the place to go for that. Most have not grown up in an organized religion and think that church is boring and old-fashioned and/or a place for intolerant, dogmatic bigots.

In the NY Times Eric Weiner writes:
 "We need a Steve Jobs of religion. Someone (or ones) who can invent not a new religion but, rather, a new way of being religious. Like Mr. Jobs's creations, this new way would be straightforward and unencumbered and absolutely intuitive. Most important, it would be highly interactive. I imagine a religious space that celebrates doubt, encourages experimentation and allows one to utter the word God without embarrassment." http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/opinion/sunday/americans-and-god.html?_r=1&ref=ericweiner

That sounds like us.

Some experts think that Unitarian Universalist churches get more visitors every Sunday than any other denomination in America. UUA President, Peter Morales, says that UUs don't have a marketing problem, they have a sales problem. So, in order to grow into the religion of the 21st Century, it could be that UUs simply have to, as Peter says, "repel fewer visitors." That's a rather blunt way of putting it. I'd rather say that UUs need to take a close look at how this ancient faith can adapt to current times and assess how its worship habits, institutional practices and UU culture can best be changed in order for that to happen.

April Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

Sunday, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

March's Transformational Theme is Transformation and Resurrection

Sunday, April 1:

Hillcrest Services — "Knowledge: Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service — "Live Whole Amongst the Broken", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

Sunday, April 8—Easter Service and Flower Communion at both campuses

Hillcrest Services — "Easter Homily", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service — "Easter Homily", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

Sunday, April 15:

Hillcrest Services — "It's All About Numbers (?)", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service — "Knowledge: Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)

Sunday, April 22:

Hillcrest Services — "Earth Rising", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service — "It's All About Numbers (?)", Rev Kathleen Owens (pre-recorded)

Sunday, April 29:

Hillcrest Services — "Resurrection Before It's Too Late", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service — "Earth Rising", Rev Kathleen Owens (pre-recorded)

Easter Fortune Eggs

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

How about starting a new tradition for the Easter Season? We're all familiar with the idea of Easter Egg Hunts and coloring Easter Eggs, but what about Fortune or Affirmation Eggs?

Prior to Easter as a family you could brainstorm positive affirmations and/or fortunes to print and put inside colorful plastic eggs. (Parents, you could add some additional surprise affirmations or fortunes for your children.) These eggs can be used for Easter Egg Hunts and in Easter Baskets. They also can be given as gifts to friends and relatives, or taken and given to people in hospitals and retirement communities. One of the real advantages of these eggs is that you do not have to worry about diets, or purchasing small toys that are rarely played with and get lost quickly. I've also seen eggs like these put in a basket as an Easter dinner table decoration. At the end of the meal, each person chose an egg and inside was the chore they were to do to clean up after the meal: clear plates, wipe down the table, put away left-overs, sweep the floor.

Here are some ideas to get you started in writing your own fortunes and affirmations:
We believe in you.

Affirmations:

- ✧ There will never be another you.
- ✧ You make all the difference.
- ✧ You are the world's only living example of you.
- ✧ You are unique.
- ✧ You are a once-in-a-universe event.
- ✧ You are a special gift to the rest of us.
- ✧ You are special, right down to your toes.
- ✧ Our world wouldn't be the same without you.

Fortunes:

- ✧ You will read a great book.
- ✧ You will help a friend.
- ✧ You will discover something exciting.
- ✧ You will learn something new and important.
- ✧ You will make a new friend.

May your Easter season be bright and beautiful.

Blessings,

Liz Jones



"Love in the Lusty Month of May"

Concert with Chris Hassett and Drew Massicot

Drawing on a portfolio of love songs as well as pop favorites, selections from Broadway, and more, singer-songwriter Chris Hassett, joined by Drew Massicot, will perform an evening of music as part of First Church's Dining for Dollars program, on Saturday, May 19th at 7:30 pm, in the Meeting House. Chris and Drew had this to say about their involvement with Dining for Dollars:



Chris: I was raised in a Unitarian Church -- fellowships actually, around the country in small, Air Force towns. I saw how much my parents worked to strengthen those organizations and, even though I belong to a bigger church, I know it takes all of us doing what we can.

I never took chorus or did musical theater but I sang to every song I heard on the radio (which is why I was always in the furthest back seat of the station wagon). At some point, I combined my love of language with my pop ear and started writing my own music. Now, with Drew's tremendous help, I can create the music I hear in my head with full arrangements. I've always loved performing. I've always been comfortable in front of a group. I plan to sing 'all the way out.'

Drew: I've been performing on the piano since I was 12 years old...first as accompanist for my church youth choir, then for the adult choir (at age 13). I majored in Music Theory/Composition (with piano) at the University of North Texas (famous for its jazz band program). I play live piano music for San Diego Hospice Art Receptions and I've subbed on Sunday mornings at First Church and South Bay campuses, as well as playing concerts here at First Church.

Chris: 6 years ago, Vicky Newman and Lisa Schaffer put on a Dining for Dollars Cabaret and Cabernet, featuring Kay Etheridge and myself.



Since then, I've done a few more: a Valentine's Concert with Drew Massicot at the home of

Peg and Harry Miller (2009) and a Chapel Concert featuring a new repertoire of "Life and Love" songs, again with Drew Massicot, and organized by Vicky Newman. Drew and I also did a Dining for Dollars concert at the South Bay campus in the summer of 2010.

Drew: Dining for Dollars events are great as fund raisers for First Church, but I think the building of community is the most important element. Therese and I give two different types of events at our home: a Mardi Gras Gumbo Singalong, and a BBQ-PingPong-HulaHoop party. Both always fill up and we have a whole lot of fun!

Chris: One more thing: as much as I enjoy my music -- performing it, sharing, recording it -- I also enjoy selling it, because that's how I'm making my transition from a freelance marketing and communications consultant to being a full-time musician and artist. Any help people can give me on that front -- through support, promotion, or just a pat on the back -- is always welcome. And I hope they let me know how I can support them, too."

Drew: Two years ago, I began learning how to record both piano and voice and have set up a home recording studio (my label is Music From the Heart) and have really enjoyed making CDs with various people (Chris Hassett included!). I also want to give a big thank you to the First Church community for all the support you have given my music over the past 20 years. Like Chris, I plan on playing the piano 'all the way out'.

Tickets for the concert (\$25, suggested donation) will be on sale between services beginning in mid-March. Chris's new CD, planned for early May release, will also be on sale after the concert.



**Julie Andrews sings
"The Lusty Month of May"**



Looking Glass Theatre

Now Our "Mattress" is Stuffed with Good Food and Great Laughs

Thanks to the supporting First Church organizations -- Earth Centered Spirituality, The Bell Ensembles, Senior High Youth Group, and UU Women- the ever popular Looking Glass Theatre pre-show dinners will be offered before each performance of "Once Upon a Mattress".

Besides the great food and camaraderie, all pre-show dinner patrons will be entitled to buy tickets to "Mattress" at the pre-show discount.

Now you can enjoy a full night of great food and lively entertainment while supporting Looking Glass Theatre and the First Church community.

All dinners begin at 6:30 PM:

Friday, April 13, 2012

Earth Centered Spirituality Circle

Menu: Spring salad w/ balsamic dressing, focaccia bread, pea soup (ham option), ice tea or wine, European dessert plate
Suggested donation: \$10, \$7 for 12 and under

Saturday, April 14, 2012

The UU Bell Ensembles

Menu: Pasta Dinner, salad, beverage, dessert
Suggested donation: \$6

Friday, April 20, 2012

First UU Senior High Youth Group

Menu: Spaghetti (meat option), salad, garlic bread, ice tea or coffee, brownie or cake.
Suggested donation: \$6

Saturday, April 21, 2012

UU Women

Menu: Soup, Bread, Salad, Cookies - Beverages: Ice Tea, Lemonade, Water
Suggested donation: \$6, \$3 for 6 and under

Once Upon A Mattress Rehearsal Photos

The talented "Mattress" cast has already formed a strong ensemble, which will translate into a laugh filled evening of fairy tale fun for the audience. Looking Glass Theatre will present "Once Upon A Mattress" on April 13, 14, 20 and 21, 2012 at 8 pm in the Meeting House of First UU Church of San Diego. Discounted tickets are available on the church patio or online at www.LookingGlassSD.org.



Top to bottom: Princess Winnifred, Shelli Francoise; Queen Aggravain, Erin-Marie Reiter; and the Wizard, John Bertsch.

The Minstrel, Paul Ford.



left to right: First Knight, Kerry Williams; and Second Knight, Andrew Ferrier.



HOW I BECAME AN ACCIDENTAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZER IN AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

CASH MOBS!
Or
BY LAUREN WAY

A cash mob is a simple enough idea.

Get together a group of people. Head over to a locally owned small business. Get everyone to spend \$20. Go out for some nosh and beverages after to celebrate. It's a chance to be bold and adventurous with a bunch of lovely, like-minded folks, all the while making an impact on your local economy and making a statement about what you value.

My friend, Andrew Samtoy, has been quite the instigator and adventurer since I met him in 1993 in room 114a in our YRUU Jr. High group, and it's only gone up from there. Andrew came up with this crazy idea of a "Cash Mob" and he wanted other people to do them outside of Cleveland, where he lives.

Before I'd even really processed that I had agreed to be the San Diego organizer, Andrew had landed himself an interview with Marketplace Money. In the story, he mentioned that San Diego was one of the cities that would be mobbing soon.

The day of the first mob, NBC showed up at my work to interview me. They did a piece about the movement for the mid-day show. At the mob, NBC and KPBS were there, along with channels 5 and 6 (who just saw the NBC story and/or heard the KPBS coverage). There were a lot of really bright lights.

At our first mob, 20-some people showed up and we went to a fantastic shop in South Park called Make Good. They sell the art, jewelry, clothing and accessories of local artists from San Diego and Tijuana. Seemed like a perfect first target. Not only are they locally owned, all of their goods are locally produced. And the owners, Sophia and John, are some of the kindest folks I've had the pleasure of meeting. 4 months later, people are walking in to the shop and saying, "Hi! I heard about you from Cash Mobs and I wanted to check you out."

The goal of Cash Mobs (at least as I see it) is not to save the world. Not even to save any particular business. It's about mindfulness. It's about looking around at your local community and being in-

involved. Being reminded that where you spend your money matters. With or without a mob, our lives will be transformed by this mindfulness. Think of it as a spiritual practice (I do). It's not always easy. It's not always comfortable. Every time we buy a cup of coffee or a birthday present or a pair of shoes... we make a choice. Being an activist doesn't have to take a lot of effort, and it can involve a lot of fun.

I keep waiting for the buzz to die down and see where the dust settles and what this becomes. So far, the dust isn't settling. And I'm so thankful to be on this surprising ride. It's not where I saw myself, and I certainly wasn't looking for it. I didn't have time to take on an international movement. But what a blessing it's been.

If you want to join me on a mob, they happen once a month. They're advertised on twitter and facebook (www.facebook.com/cmsandiego). You can read much more about the movement and what's going on with it at cash-mobs.wordpress.com (including links to all the press).



Lauren Way, a young adult at First Church, is deep in discernment with plans of heading off to Starr King School of Ministry in the Fall of 2013.





Sonja and Christina Imhoof

Women Occupy San Diego

BY Christine Imhoof

One of my New Year's resolutions was to get involved in a movement to change the political and economic systems and/or climate in San Diego and in the country. I am inspired by the dedication of the people, including Kristen Kuriga, other UU's, and many of the Occupiers. I truly believe things have to change, we cannot settle for "the system" anymore. It is energizing and I feel like I did when I was protesting the Vietnam War.

I joined MoveOn.org, and I joined Women Occupy San Diego, in addition to the group at the Church. I have been in several actions - marching into the Gaslamp district and demonstrating in front of the Bank of America, protesting their fee. I moved my account to a Credit Union. I demonstrated on the bridge at Clairemont Drive and, along with my daughter, have participated in occupying a corner at Genesee and Balboa. I have joined the Occupellas, the Women Occupy singing group. We sang for the patrons of the Lyceum Theater at the showing of "A Hammer, a Bell, and A Song to Sing." We recently sang at the demonstration against corporate personhood at the federal court house. I do all this because I am making my personal statement when I sing or demonstrate.

It's challenging to be in a leaderless group with no concrete action agenda. You have to deal with a lot of egos and listen more than talk. There are some direct actions taken by the group where there is a risk

of arrest. One of my friends was arrested when the police were setting up their yellow taped area, and she accidentally bumped into a policeman and said "excuse me." I cannot afford to risk getting arrested - I have to be home every evening to cook dinner for four people.

Women Occupy is not a diverse group - it is mainly older white women. We have an ambitious plan to reach out to other communities/cultures in San Diego, working with the homeless, families in foreclosure, families in poverty, the long-term unemployed, and other disenfranchised groups.

An action plan I would like to contribute to is working with faith leaders from the African-American, Hispanic, and other communities, holding town hall meetings with them, and developing projects focused on those concerns. Actions could include building alternative economic groups, such as coops, where people actually own the companies they work for. We have a committee at Women Occupy that is focusing on alternative economic models. Also, I am working to get candidates elected in my community who truly represent our interest.

The United States needs a constitutional amendment to eliminate corporate personhood. This country needs to re-think its economic system and its political system, and we need to make politicians and Wall Street accountable. Since I have become active, I feel more hopeful about the future - I think just the act of engaging more has helped me have a more positive outlook, even though there is little on the horizon to be hopeful about - yet! I hope other UU's, including the Youth groups will join us, including, for instance, at Occupy Your Corner events. Get ideas from groups such as MoveOn.org, occupywallst.org, or occupysandiego.org.

Exercise your right of free speech about things you care about!



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