



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Telling Our Stories

BY Nancy Fisk

Telling Our Stories is a monthly meeting on the Hillcrest campus where participants can share their stories and feelings on topics such as "Tell of a time when you were urged or forced to change." Participants are allowed to drop-in on the day of the discussion. Held on the 1st Sunday of the month, the discussion has co-facilitators who choose the theme and moderate the discussion. The next discussion will be January 1, 2012.

Jan Carpenter Tucker and Tony Brumfield started Telling Our Stories in May of 2010. It began from a conversation between Jan and another member of the church who said, "The problem that I have with conversations at church is that we look at people on the surface. Telling something about our lives and how we feel might change things." Jan and Tony, who were co-leaders of Journey Toward Wholeness at the time, agreed that there was a sense of connection on a personal level missing from the discussions First Church was having around anti-oppression/anti-racism.

Coincidentally, at that time, Kristen Kuriga was added to the staff as the Social Justice coordinator, and had an interest and a background in a process called the council method. This process is based on a method used by Native Americans, that allows everyone to speak their mind during a council or tribal meeting. Kristen and a core committee from Journey toward Wholeness developed guidelines that focused on the council method for Telling Our Stories.

Confidentiality and allowing everyone a chance to speak is crucial. Spontaneity is also an important part of this process. Because of this need, the

theme of the discussion is given just before the sharing begins. Themes are often based on the Good Relations Covenant the church has created.

The goal of Telling Our Stories is to develop a safe space for reflection and processing feelings around the participants' personal stories. "We listen from the heart, and speak from the heart,"

says Jan. "We tell our own story, not someone else's." She adds that an important part of this process is giving the person telling their story the group's undivided attention. After everyone has had a chance to speak, there is a time for witness and reflection, and considering what the group story is; what people have in common, or what is dissimilar about their stories.

With these discussions, participants have been able to dig deeply into their feelings on a subject. According to Jan, "It's another way to grow and share spiritually with each other."

Telling Our Stories was a very successful workshop at District Assembly this last May, with 45 people participating, 30 of them youth members. A new group will be started on the South Bay campus of First Church in January. That group will meet the 2nd Sunday of the month, the week after the Hillcrest group. For more information, contact Kristen Kuriga at Kristen@firstuusandiego.org.



Also in this issue:

Arvid's Arcania—The Poetry of the Winter Holidays [Pg 2](#)

December Sermons [Pg 2](#)

Family Triads [Pg 3](#)

Holiday Programs [Pg 4](#)

Making a Payment to Your Pledge [Pg 5](#)

Outcome Statements [Pg 6](#)

George Kauffman [Pg 7](#)



Arvid's Arcania

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

The Poetry of the Winter Holidays

When a woman asked Dylan Thomas, after a poetry reading, what his poem Fern Hill meant, he replied, "Lady, if I could have said any plainer I would have."

There are many ways to express truth. Some truths, like the laws of physics, are most effectively expressed by mathematical formulas. Others are best expressed by tightly reasoned arguments. But some truths are so profound and multi-dimensional that they can only be expressed by analogy, story and poetry. They simply cannot be reduced to factual declaration or belief. The greatest teachers of religious truth, like the Buddha and Jesus, relied on parable and story to teach us how to live and how to love. It isn't the facts of our lives but the story of our lives that defines who we are.

So if you get hung up on the apparent fact claims behind some of our winter holidays, like Virgin Births, magical stars, building fires for the return of the Sun on the longest night or the claim that one day's worth of oil burned for eight days, try letting go and finding the poetry behind these claims. These are not scientific facts. They tell us something about our souls and our lives and our people. Tell the stories. Sing the songs. Deck the halls. Light the candles. Bring in the greenery. Prepare the feast. Ring in the New Year.

Merry Christmas. Happy Solstice. Happy Hanukkah.

I look forward to spending a brand new year with you.

Happy Holidays

November Sermons

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

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

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

December's Transformational Theme is Hope

Sunday, December 4:

Hillcrest Services "Proudly Singing Kum Bah Yah", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service "Unitarian Universalism in the Philippines", Nihal Attanayake (pre-recorded)

Sunday, December 11:

Hillcrest Services "How Should We Speak to One Another", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service "Proudly Singing Kum Bah Yah", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)

Sunday, December 18:

Hillcrest Services "Joyful, All Ye Nations Rise" (live) – Annual Music Service.

We celebrate the Christmas season with carols of many lands and traditions. From the spirited dance-like Spanish carol "Fum, Fum, Fum" to the lovely Christina Rossetti poem set to Gustav Holst's music "In the Bleak Midwinter and Jason Shelton's contemporary "The Dawning of Our Dreams, we invoke the deepest meanings of the season. This festival service features our Chalice Choir and Youth Choir "Voices in Unity," as well as both of our handbell ensembles.

South Bay Service "How Should We Speak to One Another", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

Saturday, December 24:

Hillcrest 5 p.m. Service Vespers Service and Nativity Tableau (live)

Hillcrest 8 p.m. Service Annual Candlelight Service (live)

Sunday, December 25:

Hillcrest Service at 11:30 a.m. only Christmas Day Service of Carols and Stories, Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

Following the Service, at 12:30 p.m. join in our Christmas Day Potluck in the Common Room

South Bay Service - No South Bay Service on Christmas, Attendees are encouraged to Attend Hillcrest Worship

Family Triads

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry



Would you like to get to know other families in the church better? Would you like to make some deeper connections? Consider joining in a Family Triad. Three families

will be matched together and from February through June, they will agree to meet together at least three times away from the church. These gatherings can happen in a home, or at a park. The general expectation will be that these families will share a meal, engage in activities that are appropriate for all the members of the families involved, and that you will take the time to talk and learn about each other.

If you are interested in being matched with other families, contact me at liz@firstuusandiego.org and I will send you a very simple application for involvement. This will include your name, the names and ages of your family members. I will need to know your contact information, the region where you live, and whether it matters to you if you are matched with people in your geographic area. This program is intended specifically for families with children, but if you would like to be considered as a surrogate grandparent or aunt or uncle to a family with children, your application

will be consider for matching with families who state that they are interested in making such a connection. Matches of families with children will take priority in making up the triads.

Each family in a triad will take responsibility for hosting one of the three required meetings. This can be held in your home, a park, or at another mutually agreed upon site. The host family will be responsible for any specific activities for that session and for coordinating the food. I will be happy to provide some initial getting acquainted activities for triads if you feel you need some initial ice-breakers for the group. Please know that triads are welcome to meet more than three times, but this is the commitment that we are asking the families to agree to.

At the end of June I will follow up with the Triads to see how everything went, and we will make plans for developing new triads in the following church year. I hope you will consider taking part. I look forward to hearing from you!



Liz Jones

Holiday Programs



Guest at Your Table

Begins November 27 (Sunday, Hillcrest and South Bay Campuses. Join members and friends as we take a special donation box home for our dining tables and work with our families and friends to collect coins and bills for the UU Service Committee which provides assistance and support to international efforts against poverty and injustice. These boxes will be collected on Christmas Eve (and the three Sundays following.)

The Advent Experience

December 1 (Thursday) at 6:30 p.m., Clark Chapel, Hillcrest Campus. The Advent Experience is part class, part worship, part experience with Rev Kathleen Owens. Come learn about this important Christian holiday, how it links with the Christian holiday of Christmas, and experience an advent. Please contact Chris Christenson at 619-298-9978, ext. 214 to register.

Marching in the 50th Annual Starlight Parade in Chula Vista

December 3 (Saturday) at 5 p.m., Third Ave, Downtown Chula Vista. Join UUs of the South Bay in parading down Third Ave in this annual parade. We will have 50 walkers holding our church banner. Walkers - wear white hats, white shirts or jackets and black pants (please dress for warmth). Bring a small flashlight. We will be passing out tea lights attached to a card with our mission statement and the contact information. This is a great family-friendly opportunity, and children are welcome. The route is from H Street to E Street and the parade begins at 6 p.m. Parking can be hard, so please plan on arriving by 5 p.m.

December Youth Choral Concert

December 3 (Saturday) at 7 p.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. Join First UU's youth choir "Voices in Unity," under the direction of Lynn Mendoza-Khan for seasonal choral music, solos and duets from popular musicals. A requested \$10 donation at the door, will be used to support the growth of this vital part of our music program.

Young Adult Sponsored Craft Fair

December 4 (Sunday) Hillcrest Campus, following worship Services, Common Room and Upper Patio. You'll find one of a kind gifts and treats – jewelry, pottery, handmade paper, textile arts, painting, photography, and more.

Holiday Stress-Buster Meditation Retreat

December 10 (Saturday) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Clark Chapel, Hillcrest Campus. Meditation Retreat with Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister and John Holl, Sangha Leader. Take a break from your busy holiday schedule to cultivate mindfulness, loving kindness and a peaceful mind, especially for those that are brand new to meditation. Bring a bag lunch. A follow-up session on December 20 (Tuesday) from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., will help you establish a firm foundation for a regular meditation practice. Please contact Chris Christenson at 619-298-9978, ext. 214 to register.

Winter Solstice

December 17 (Saturday) 6:30 p.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. Through stories, music, dance, drumming, and ritual, we honor the ageless triumph of the human spirit on this sacred night. This is the 15th year we have brought our very special Winter Solstice Ritual to First Church. Festive attire is still encouraged! Children and families are welcome. The suggested donation is \$10 Adults, \$5 for children 12 and younger. There is no charge for infants. You must pre-purchase tickets for this sell-out event.

Annual Service of Music

December 18 (Sunday) 9:30 & 11:30 a.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. We celebrate the Christmas season with choirs, brass and bells! From the spirited dance-like Spanish carol "Fum, Fum, Fum" to the lovely Christina Rossetti poem set to Gustav Holst's music "In the Bleak Midwinter" and Jason Shelton's contemporary "The Dawning of Our Dreams", we invoke the deepest meanings of the season. This festival service features our Chalice Choir and Youth Choir "Voices in Unity," as well as both of our Handbell ensembles.

Christmas Eve Family Vespers

December 24 (Saturday) 5 p.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. Christmas Eve worship with stories and music. This is a wonderful family friendly worship service in the spirit of Christmas.

Candlelight Service of Readings and Carols

December 24 (Saturday) 8 p.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. Light a candle of hope, light a candle in thanksgiving; our traditional service of darkness allows us to rest amid the clamor of the season, to find solace in the holy night. Listen to the songs of our Chalice Choir and JUUL Tones vocal ensemble; listen to stories ancient and new; let your own heart sing.

Christmas Day Worship

December 25 (Sunday) 11:30 a.m., Meeting House, Hillcrest Campus. Join us for one worship service on Christmas Day followed by a wonderful all church Christmas Dinner Potluck. There will be no worship at our South Bay site this day. Please bring your favorite holiday dish for 6 to 8 and leave it in the Common Room on your way to the Service. We are in need of several people who will act as hosts to receive the food and ensure that it is kept warm or cold while the service is in progress and will put the food out in time for our meal. We will also need volunteers to help clean up following the meal.

New Year Worship Service

January 1 (Sunday), 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., Hillcrest and 10:00 a.m., South Bay. Join us for wonderful New Year worship for all ages! These intergenerational services will be filled with beautiful music, readings and a ritual for everyone to set intentions for the New Year ahead.



MAKING A PAYMENT TO YOUR PLEDGE

BY Robie Evans, Director of Operations

Can you believe I've now started my sixth month as your Director of Operations? Time flies by so quickly. I'm having fun and learning lots. And, I'm thinking of ways to make our financial systems more efficient. So, I decided to write this article.

We now have concurrent pledges going at the same time, so I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you, our devoted membership, how you can ensure your payment is applied to the right place. At the present time, there are basically four pledges that we are receiving payments for:

- Operating 10/11
- Operating 11/12
- Campus Renewal 2008
- Miracle Sunday/Capital Drive 2

When you are paying by check (either hand-written OR by using your financial institution's bill pay service), please write on the memo line, "Pledge - Oper 10/11" (or whichever pledge you are making a payment against). This will only work if you've already submitted a written pledge.

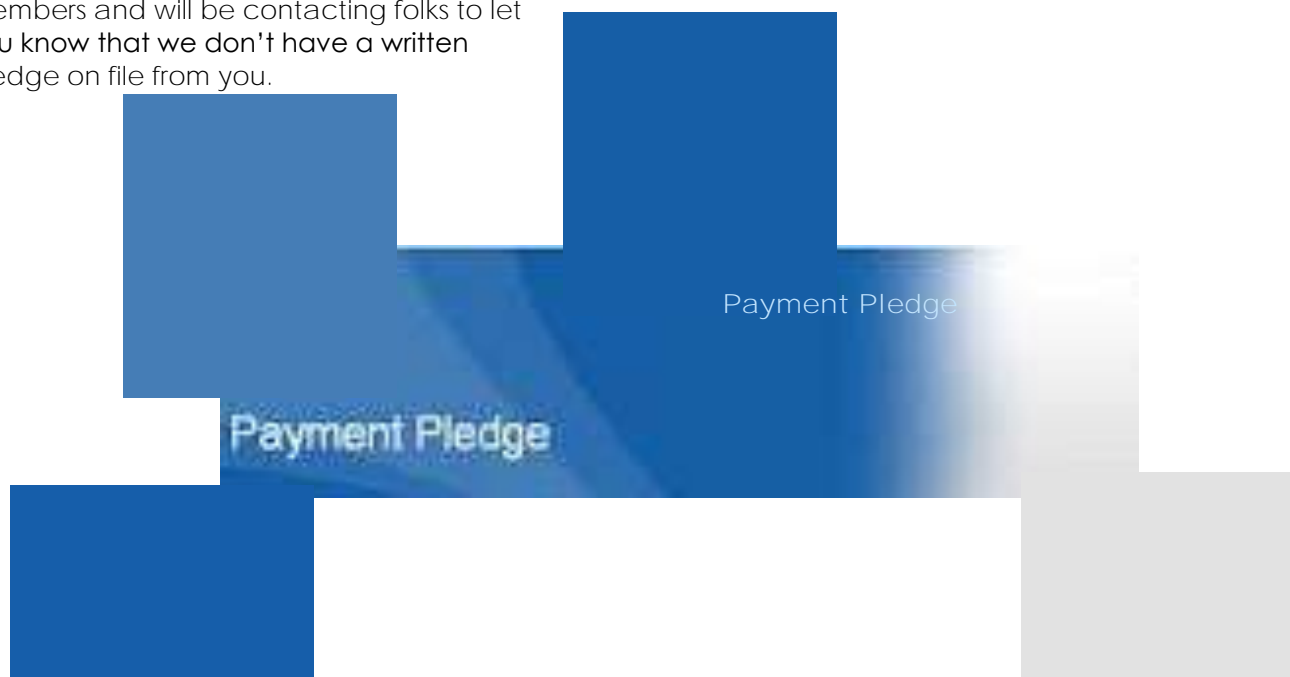
We receive many payments that say "pledge" in the memo line, but we have no written pledge for that member, so we have to apply it as a "gift". I'm in the process now of compiling a list of these members and will be contacting folks to let you know that we don't have a written pledge on file from you.

Also, as you know, our weekly Sunday offerings are given to a designated local charity organization each month. Again, if you write a check that you want to go to these charities, please write "Generosity" on the memo line of your check. It will be so directed. Beginning December 1st, any check where the memo line is left blank will first be researched to see if there is a pledge, and if not, it will go to an income account entitled "Sunday Collections" which goes directly to the church's current operating funds.

If you are paying in cash during the service, please complete the small offering envelope provided with your name, amount and check the appropriate box to indicate where your donation should be applied.

You will continue to receive quarterly pledge statements from me via email letting you know what we have received and applied as payments to your current pledge(s). Please carefully review these statements and get back to me if you see any changes that need to be made.

Last, but not least, a very big loving "Thank You" for your continuing generosity to our church, whether it's monetarily and/or through volunteer efforts. It is very much appreciated by all.



Outcome Statements

BY Rose Van Oss, Vice President, Board of Trustees

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego operates under a form of government called Policy Governance developed by John and Miriam Carver. This form of government involves a clear separation of direction, oversight, and action. Direction is given through outcomes, the goals and visions First Church wishes to accomplish. The outcomes are developed by the Board based on feedback from the congregation.

The purpose of an outcome is to: Define the expectations for the organization, the performance that will constitute success. In order to exercise oversight, the board must define success.

Outcomes are defined as: Which human needs are to be met, for whom, and at what cost.

Outcomes are the direction the Board wishes the staff and ministry teams to pursue while operating within the executive limitations established. The goal is to give direction without restricting energy and imagination.

Periodically, your Board reviews the Outcomes and makes revisions based on conversations with the congregation. The Board will be revising our Outcomes based on feedback from you. Our current Outcomes appear at the end of this article.

If you would like to meet with a member of the Board and discuss your vision for our future please visit with the Board on Sunday, Jan. 8, after first service in room 113 from 10:45 to 11:15 or on Sunday, Jan. 15 after second service in room 113 from 12:45 to 1:15. Or contact Rose Van Oss at etvo1@cox.net.

Our Outcome Statements

- ✧ We are comforted and challenged by worship and programs that appeal to our hearts, minds, and values and where a variety of spiritual paths are not only welcomed but celebrated.
- ✧ We are an intentionally diverse, multicultural, and welcoming community where gifts can be discovered, nurtured, and shared.
- ✧ We identify and challenge oppression within and beyond our church community so that all people may have their worth and dignity affirmed.
- ✧ We create a space that fosters growth in spirit, person, knowledge, and skills in a safe environment; a space that supports families in all their configurations.
- ✧ We cherish compassionate relationships that enable us to care for and support each other in times of joy and sorrow.
- ✧ We address the needs and issues necessary to produce a more just, equitable, and compassionate society for each other, all beings, and the planet.
- ✧ Our facilities are well maintained, environmentally responsible, accessible, aesthetically pleasing, and technologically current.
- ✧ We affirm Unitarian Universalism and its Seven Principles at the congregational, cluster, district, and continental levels.
- ✧ We are generous with our resources, time, and talents both to our church and to others in need.

An Interview with George Kauffman

BY Robert Mahon



George Kauffman

I was born in Ames, Iowa the sixth of seven children. It was the start of the Great Depression, 1930. My dad was a cook and a house painter, my mom was a very busy home maker and though we always had enough to eat, we were poor.

Except for a year in south-west Missouri, I was raised and went to school in Iowa. When I was ten, my dad left and my mom raised those that were still at home. My sister and I went to stay with my dad when I was 14. He was working at the ship-yards in San Francisco, but after a year we went back to be with mother.

I attended a private business college in Iowa and also a Methodist college, but when I was old enough, a buddy and I joined the navy. Boot camp was at Great Lakes, Illinois then I was sent to North Island, San Diego.

I married in 1951, attended SDSU and started teaching elementary school in 1957. I worked 21 years for the San Diego Unified School District, mostly as an administrator. In 1957, my wife and I joined First Church. We'd come with friends to hear Margaret Mead give a talk at the old church on Sixth and Beech. We were disillusioned with our Methodist creed and found that the Unitarianism was more in line with our beliefs.

We raised 3 children in the church (all now in their 50's) and they particularly enjoyed the transition year between the downtown church and our pre-

sent campus. That year worship services were held at the Lafayette Hotel. The kids just loved the swimming pool.

My wife Marilyn and I were very active in the church, she in the children's Religious Education program, and me in music. I was a member of the first choir at the new location. I was on the music committee when we hired Ken and Dan, and was music chair when we installed our first pipe organ in 1968. Around this time, Marilyn and I separated. I'd questioned my sexuality for many years but thought that if I married, things would be fine. Marilyn got custody of the children, but we remained on good terms and I was very involved in their upbringing.

In the late 70's, a few years into their new ministry, I approached Tom and Caroline Owen-Towle with the idea of starting a gay/lesbian outreach. They began a series of classes called, 'Gay/Straight Awareness'. Over 25 people showed up for the first class, and after the series ended, that group continued for years to meet in people's homes.

Eventually it transitioned into having a small service in the lounge before regular services. Many gays in the congregation were loath to be recognized as such and they met behind curtained windows so as not to be seen. The acceptance by our ministers of gays in our community is the biggest change I've seen in our church. Tom and Caroline were always so supportive and that tradition continues with our current ministry team

I had stayed with the school district until 1980 and then became religious education director for our church for 5 years. I left San Diego for a spell to be with my partner in Washington, D.C. and we have done a lot of traveling over the years. My latest travels have been to pursue my family genealogy, to England where my mother's family had come from in the mid 1800's, and to Switzerland from where my father's family had come pre-revolutionary war."

I describe myself as an agnostic. I just don't know. I think you just have to keep on keeping on. You don't grow, you wither on the vine.

“Acceptance was the biggest change I've seen”

Staff

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister
Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister
Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
Robie Evans, Director of Operations
Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry
Käthe Larick, Youth Program Coordinator
Chris Christenson, Communications / DB / AE Coordinator
Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice Ministry Team Coordinator and South Bay Ministry Leader
Kenneth F. Herman, Director of Music
Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development
Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator
Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti
Patty Eshleman, Director, Unitarian Cooperative Preschool


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<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

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