



# FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

## Seven Principles, Twelve Steps

By Kath Hillery



Addiction affects almost two thirds of American families<sup>1</sup>. One of the most effective methods of treating any type of addiction involves working a version of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous<sup>2</sup>. A key component of all Twelve Step programs is to meet with others who have a desire to get sober and share their experience, strength and hope as they strive to create a connection with something larger than themselves. They heal themselves and their relationships by accepting responsibility for past behavior. One day at a time, they seek to live a more spiritual life.

It seems there is a Twelve Step program for every possible addiction or personal problem. The one thing they all have in common is the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous<sup>3</sup> that were formalized by Bill W. as the Alcoholics Anonymous program spread throughout the U.S. in the 1930's. Family members and friends of addicted people receive help from similar groups such as Al-Anon, which also relies on a version of the Twelve Steps as their framework for recovery. Members of various religions have adapted the steps to reflect their spiritual understandings.

The steps can be considered in three parts. The first three steps involve admitting there is a problem and developing an understanding of a power greater than oneself that has the power to "restore ... sanity"<sup>4</sup>. Steps four through nine lead the follower through a process of accepting personal responsibility for past actions. The final three steps provide guidance for living a complete life that does not harm oneself or others.

AA and other Twelve Step groups are anonymous because this fosters an environment that encourages honest sharing. Sharing with others who are also working on improving themselves is a key step toward recovery, as it begins the process of accepting responsibility for how others have been harmed by our actions.

For some people who are attracted to a Unitarian Universalist congregation, the idea of power greater than themselves, which others might call a Higher Power, or "God," is enough to keep them from attending a Twelve Step program. This problem is not new to AA, and in fact, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous includes a chapter to agnostics and atheists to help them begin to find a concept of a Higher Power that works for them.

Here at First UU, a new type of Twelve Step meeting has convened. This meeting combines study of the Twelve Steps with the consideration of the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism. This group is different from groups affiliated with Twelve Step organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon because it is affiliated with this church, and it welcomes members from all Twelve Step programs. This mixture of programs leads to understanding recovery from a broader perspective, and reinforces the commonality of the programs, regardless of the original addiction or problem.

All who are working a Twelve Step program and want to increase their spiritual connection to something outside themselves are welcome to attend the Seven Principles, Twelve Steps group. This meeting is designed to support people who are working a program, but it is not a place to get sober, as newly sober members need more immersion in a 12 step program than this mixed group can provide.

The Seven Principles, Twelve Steps group meets on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the library of the Welcome Center. For more information, send an email to [seven\\_by\\_twelve@juno.com](mailto:seven_by_twelve@juno.com), or call the church office to request a return phone call. The UU World published an article about meetings of this type, and the article can be accessed with this link: <http://www.uuworld.org/2000/0100feat1.html>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/pdf/press\\_releases/2004-05-14\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/pdf/press_releases/2004-05-14_press_release.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2746426/>

<sup>3</sup> 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous [http://aa.org/en\\_pdfs/smf-121\\_en.pdf](http://aa.org/en_pdfs/smf-121_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous [http://aa.org/en\\_pdfs/smf-121\\_en.pdf](http://aa.org/en_pdfs/smf-121_en.pdf)

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## Arvid's Arcana— "Putting Away The Holiday Blender"

By Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

*Previously published in December 2008*

No, I'm not talking about holiday drinks.

As you know, Unitarian Universalism includes people from various religious backgrounds and diverse spiritual paths. The month of December includes several holidays that are special to some of these traditions. Advent and Christmas are important to UU Christians and there are secular meanings to the latter holiday that are important to many of us. Chanukah is a Jewish Festival of Lights. Solstice or Yule is a very important festival for pagans. And Kwanzaa has great meaning to many African Americans.

Each of these holidays, as we celebrate them here at First Church, is filled with universal meanings that we can all celebrate together. Advent is the expectant waiting for that which wants to be born in each of us. Chanukah and Kwanzaa both celebrate liberation and justice, along with other meanings. Solstice helps us participate with nature in the return of the sun and the nurturing cycles of light and dark within and among us. And Christmas is ripe with meanings of hope, peace on earth, goodwill toward all and the holiness of each child that is born.

The way we celebrate these holidays at First Church may not be exactly as they are celebrated in other religious traditions, but we feel that we are being true to their universal meanings.

Unitarian Universalists, in my opinion, too often take these holiday meanings and traditions, blend them all together, and serve them up at once in a misguided attempt at inclusiveness. A better way of being inclusive, in my opinion, is to celebrate them separately, so that that beauty of each tradition can stand on its own. If you glance at the worship schedule for December, you will see that that is what we are doing at First Church.

Apropos of that, a word about Christmas carols. The worship team has decided to use the traditional words to the familiar carols and to include wonderful new carols from our own Unitarian Universalist tradition as well. The language in those carols is not always gender inclusive and there are some theological statements in them that, if taken literally, Unitarian Universalists would not agree with. But the words of the beloved carols, sung by generations of our ancestors, are poetry, not theological arguments. And since we are not fundamentalists, we can sing them and appreciate them as poetry. And a number of these carols have Unitarian or Universalist roots. Sing hearty and enjoy!

## December Sermon Messages

### Celebration Times:

#### Hillcrest Campus:

Sunday, 9:30a (Traditional) and  
11:30a (Contemporary)

#### South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30a

(Intergenerational, Bi-lingual [Spanish, English])

The December **Transformational Theme** is  
**Peace**

### Sunday, December 2:

Hillcrest Services—"Mastering Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service—"Right Livelihood", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)

### Sunday, December 9:

Hillcrest Services—"The High Price of Peace", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service—"On the Day You Were Born", Emily Webb, Intern (live)

### Sunday, December 16:

Hillcrest Services—"The End of War", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service—"The High Price of Peace", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

### Sunday, December 23:

Hillcrest Services—"Peace in Our Families" with Child Dedication, Emily Webb, Intern (live)

South Bay Service—"The End of War", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)

### Monday, December 24: Christmas Eve

Family Vespers Service and Nativity Tableau at 5:30 p.m.

Candlelight Service at 8 p.m.

### Sunday, December 30:

Hillcrest Services—"Out With the Old", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service—"Out With the Old", Liz Jones, DRE (live)

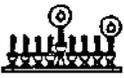


# Eight Days of Hanukkah

By Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

One of the lovely things about the celebration of Hanukkah is that the celebration last eight days. This time allows for more reflection and intentionality around the celebration. It is also a holiday that centers on the home and family. The nightly lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah provides a pause in the day's activities.

Some of us were not raised in the Jewish faith, but we can use this time of year to stop and reflect – to pause. This year Hanukkah begins at Sundown on December 8. You might consider these following suggestions as ways to honor and recognize these eight days and celebrate one of our Unitarian Universalist Sources.

<p>Day 1 </p> <p>It is sometimes as important to serve as to lead. The <i>Shammash</i> (or servant) candle is used to light the other 8 candles – serving an important, higher purpose. In what ways do you serve? (To your family, community, church...)</p>	<p>Day 2 </p> <p>Heroes and heroines are an important part of many religious traditions. How are some important heroes and heroines in your life?</p>	<p>Day 3 </p> <p>Pictures on coins can tell a lot about the people who use them. Who's picture would you choose to put on a coin and why?</p>	<p>Day 4 </p> <p>The <i>dreidel</i> game is a favorite Hanukkah tradition. Find a <i>dreidel</i> and learn to play the game. Play with your family or friends. If you play for real money, you can donate your winnings to a worthy cause.</p>
<p>Day 5 </p> <p>The Jewish calendar is coordinated with the changing phases of the moon. Each new month begins with the appearance of a new moon. Celebrate tonight's new moon with a resolution to do something important during the upcoming 29 days.</p>	<p>Day 6 </p> <p>The seven-branched menorah, symbol of eternal light and truth, was a sacred part of the Jewish temple. Create your own seven branched candelabra (or other shape) to keep year round in your home as a symbol of values you feel are most important.</p>	<p>Day 7 </p> <p>Bravery is an important aspect in Jewish history, especially in the Hanukkah story. Consider times when you have acted bravely.</p>	<p>Day 8 </p> <p>The Hanukkah menorah shines as a symbol of hope and faith in the future. On this final night make a list of eight things you hope for the future of our world.</p>

You can find many sites on the Internet that will tell you the story/history of Hanukkah. One site is <http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/hanukkah.htm>. To learn how to play the dreidel, go to <http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Dreidel>. Or, you might want to find one of many YouTube videos on how to play!

Enjoy the Holidays!

# Drew Massicot and Thérèse Bélanger Discuss Channing Society Membership

By Iris Masotti, Planned Giving Committee

## Background

Our church created the Channing Society to recognize, honor and thank the generous individuals who have made or arranged for a contribution to our church's long-term financial survival, health and vision. Membership is open to anyone who includes the First UU Church in their estate planning documents—wills, trusts, IRAs, 401Ks, life insurance and other arrangements or current gifts of cash including real estate or securities.

Members not only experience the joy of helping advance our church's mission and values, but are honored through the addition of their names on the sculpture on the wall of our meeting house, and are invited to special donor events.

Drew and Thérèse recently agreed to talk with me about their experience as members of the Channing Society and I learned the following:

## Excerpts from Interview

Many years ago we heard of the Channing Society through First UU friends who were members. In 2006, when we created our Living Trust, we included First Church as one of its beneficiaries, but we did not know that the church office likes to have a record of this. In fact, it was only in 2011 that we learned that First Church had a Planned Giving Form to use in conjunction with the Channing Society. So, we completed those forms and dropped them off at the church. The process was quick and easy. It gave us a feeling of satisfaction about our gift and, the church had the important information it needs.

Our gift is important to us because we believe First Church is a deserving congregation that embodies and supports the values that we aspire to live by. We cherish the people we have met and the friends we have made at

First Church, and want to see the community continue to thrive. Our participation in the Channing Society is just another way of showing our commitment to the congregation.

In looking at the Channing Society website, we were impressed with the long list of church members of all ages who are Channing members, and we feel good knowing that we will continue to support the church and its' important mission in the community and beyond – even after we are gone! We hope others who read this would consider becoming a part of the Channing Society, too.

Please go to our church website at [firstuusandiego.org](http://firstuusandiego.org) and find GIVING at the top right. Under it, you will see a Channing Society tab <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/the-channing-society> that contains the Bequest Form, ways of becoming a member, an interesting history of Channing, and a continuously scrolling list of First Church Channing Society members. Also under the GIVING tab, you will see Planned Giving. That tab provides information about modes of gifting and help in providing the information needed by the church to fulfill your wishes. All information is kept locked and confidential. Check out this interesting part of our website!



# COFFEE HOUR CAUTION

By UUA.ORG, YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

## Coffee Hour Caution

...advice for older adults greeting young adults  
in Unitarian Universalist churches

✗ - Avoid saying:

**"How old are you?"**

*Why: Is age so important? There's no good answer. Just avoid this one altogether.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"What did you think of the service today?"**

✗ - Avoid saying:

**"Are you new here?"**

*Why: A young adult may have been attending for years, you just haven't met them. This implies you think they don't belong in the church.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"I don't think we've met, my name is..."**

✗ - Avoid saying:

**"When are you planning to have kids?"**

*Why: Having or not having kids is a private matter and not one people may want to discuss. This implies you only value young adults for their future children, not as a peer adult, here and now.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"What brought you here today?"**

✗ - Avoid saying:

**"What do you do? / What year are you in school?"**

*Why: For those who are un- or under-employed, work is a tricky question - and assuming someone is a student implies you think they are a certain age. Give them the chance to talk about whatever is meaningful, which might not be school or a job.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"So tell me about yourself."**

✗ - Avoid saying:

**"We need more young people!"**

*Why: Like everyone else, young adults want to be seen for who they are rather than as a token for their age group.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"Great to meet you!"**

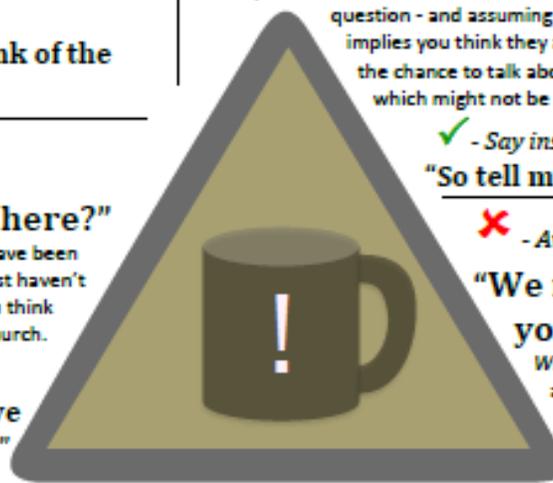
✗ - Avoid saying:

**"Have you met our other young adult?"**

*Why: Young adults enjoy friends of all ages. Welcome them into the community of faith and fellowship.*

✓ - Say instead:

**"Can I introduce you to my friend?"**



✓ DO: Introduce yourself • Make friends • Be interested • Reach out • Respect boundaries



Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Unitarian Universalist Association • [uua.org/youngadults](http://uua.org/youngadults)

## THE WOMENS MINISTERS' TABLECLOTH

By CAROLYN OWEN-TOWLE

MsUU (Ministerial sisterhood Unitarian Universalist) was formed by the Rev. Marjorie Learning. It gave women clergy a much needed forum in which to grow in solidarity with one another. In 1979, I became its third president. During that period, the tablecloth project was begun.

In 1980, Judy Chicago's magnificent "Dinner party", a beautiful handmade tablecloth with dinner settings honoring women, was reverberating through women's awareness, and the idea for a MsUU tablecloth was born.

In previous years, the MsUU table at General Assembly had looked unimaginative and forlorn, with a few pictures, sermons and bits of history placed on it. This year, I covered the MsUU table with two long lengths of material sewn together. Embroidery pens were made available and on the tablecloth was a sign asking those women who had been ordained UU ministers to write their signatures with "Rev." before their name.

The inception of the tablecloth was modest enough, yet significant, in that as recently as 1973, there had been only a handful of female UU ministers in pulpits. Seven years later, Unitarian Universalist clergy had made substantial growth in numbers, as women comprised a greater percentage of theological students in UU seminaries.

The first names scrawled on the cloth did not look as we had anticipated. The pens didn't write well on the textured fabric and the results looked rough and ragged. Disappointed, I evaluated it as having been a good experiment and might have tucked it away in a drawer to be forgotten if Marjorie Learning herself hadn't protested, suggesting that I have the names embroidered.

I issued an invitation in the newsletter, asking both women and men to help embroider the tablecloth. A core of what would become 29 embroiderers gathered together. The tales we told and the laughter we shared as we unfolded our family stories made the event a rich and delightful beginning to an ongoing project of work and love.

Each following year new ministers signed the tablecloth, and I brought it back to San Diego where our women gathered and embroidered minister's names. If an embroiderer pricked her finger, a flower was devised to cover the spot.



After several years, it was decided that some kind of decoration would greatly enhance the aesthetic dimension of the cloth. A Celtic border was designed, drawn, and damask was sewn in strips, and appliquéd in place, all by gifted Mary Barranger. I invited clergywomen to bring or send me pieces of lace from their mother's and grandmother's lace boxes and Mary crafted and sewed these into the border. The cloth was taking on a life and "herstory" of its own.

In 1987, we found a way to add the embroiderers' names to the tablecloth. We decided that their autographs would be stitched in a color close to that of the cloth along the Celtic border. Across one end we embroidered, "Wrought with love by the women of First Unitarian Church from 1980 forward."

Today, the tablecloth resides at Meadville Lombard Theological School, in Chicago, where it will be permanently framed and mounted on the wall signifying an epochal period of growth and maturity in our denomination.

These are the names of our First Church women whose names, love and a touch of DNA are on the cloth: Ella Agnew, Mary Barranger, Ida Blackman, Kathleen Carroll, Caroline Clark, Helen Dooley, Eleanor Doyle, Ethel Drake, Barbara Frank, Trudy Hart, Wynne Hollingshead, Edwina Howatt, Elizabeth Jones, Louise Karstens, Bernice Maller, Sallie Munafa, Evelyn Nostrand, Carolyn Owen-Towle, Shirley Perry, Erene Ralles, Ginny Schmitz, Izetta Segal, Barbara Spalding, Mary Swedelius, Martha Thomson, Sally Thompson, Marcie Thomer, Colleen Wells, Elaine Wilson.



## First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego Winter Holiday Schedule 2012

### "Singing in the Season" by Voices in Unity singers and the First UU Church Children's Choir

**December 1 at 7:00 p.m., Meeting House, First UU Church in Hillcrest**

*Choral and vocal music to welcome the season directed by Ken Herman with Chris Ferguson as piano accompanist.*

### Chalice Choir sings "Five Hebrew Love Songs"

**December 2 at 9:30 a.m., Meeting House, First UU Church, Hillcrest Campus**

*As part of our Sunday worship service, Eric Whittacre's "Five Hebrew Love Songs" will be sung by the Chalice Choir under the direction of Daniel Ratelle, with violinist Robie Evans and pianist Ken Herman.*

### Annual Intergenerational Holiday Tree Decorating Party and Potluck

**Friday, December 7 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Bard Hall, First UU Church in Hillcrest**

*Join us for a Potluck at 6 p.m. by bringing a dish to share that serves 8. Following the meal, supplies will be available to create ornaments for our tree. While the tree is being trimmed we will sing carols while Drew Massicot plays the piano.*

### La Posada sin Fronteras--19th Annual Posada Without Borders- Welcome!

**Saturday, December 8 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Border Field State Park**

*Join with our brothers and sisters from Tijuana to witness the re-enactment of the Bible story of Mary and Joseph who, while sojourners in Bethlehem, were forced to seek shelter on the night of Jesus' birth. There is a \$5 ENTRANCE FEE PER VEHICLE. If the road leading to Friendship Park is impassible, you should prepare to walk 45 minutes into the park area. Everyone is subject to Border Patrol inspection, so bring proper identification documents and ensure your vehicle is properly registered.*

### 16th Annual Winter Solstice December 15 at 6:30 p.m., First UU Church, Hillcrest Campus

*Through stories, music, dance, drumming and ritual, we honor the ageless triumph of the human spirit on this sacred night. This year we will be serving wassail on our enchanted patio before the ritual and drumming and dancing will take place following the ritual. Festive attire encouraged! Donation Requested: Adults \$10.00 Children 12-years-old and younger: \$5.00. There is no charge for infants. For more ticket information, please contact [alice@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:alice@firstuusandiego.org) or call (619) 298-9978.*

### Family Vespers December 24 at 5:30 p.m., Meeting House, First UU Church, Hillcrest Campus

*Traditional Family Christmas Eve intergenerational service is filled with music and stories. Our children will present a tableau of the Christmas story as we sing the carols that tell the story.*

### Traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

**December 24, at 8:00 p.m. Meeting House, First UU Church, Hillcrest Campus**

*Carols, and Christmas readings with the Chalice Choir under the direction of Daniel Ratelle.*

### Christmas Day Potluck

**Tuesday, December 25 from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Bard Hall, First UU Church in Hillcrest**

*Join us for a Potluck by bringing a side dish to share that serves 8. We'll have turkey and vegetarian/vegan dishes for all!*

### Las Campanas Handbell Ensemble

**December 27 at 5:00, 6:00, & 7:00 p.m. at the San Diego Zoo (Balboa Park)**

*Las Campanas handbell ensemble under the direction of Ken Herman rings as part of the annual Jungle Bells just inside the Zoo's main entrance.*

### Interfaith Shelter Network's Winter Homeless Shelter

**December 30 to January 13 at First UU Church, Hillcrest Campus**

*In hosting the shelter at our congregation, we will need groups who can offer evening potluck meals, individuals who are willing to stay at the church as overnight hosts, and donations of bedding and other supplies. If you are interested in hosting a meal or being an overnight host, please contact Kristen at: [Kristen@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:Kristen@firstuusandiego.org) or 619-298-9978, 216. There will also be sign-upsheets on the Social Justice table at Hillcrest and the Get Involved Table in South Bay.*

**Staff**

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister  
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister  
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister  
 Emily Webb, Intern Minister  
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations  
 Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry  
 Käthe Larick, Youth Program Coordinator  
 Chris Christenson, Communications / Adult Ed. Coordinator  
 Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice and South Bay  
 Ministry Teams Coordinator  
 Kenneth F. Herman, Director of Music  
 Dana Decker, Associate Director of Music  
 Daniel Ratelle, Adult Choir Director  
 Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development  
 Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator  
 Abby Koch, Executive Administrator and Office Manager  
 Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti  
 Patty Eshleman, Director, Unitarian Cooperative Preschool

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 Main Website: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org>  
 South Bay Campus:  
<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

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